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OUTLINES OF PHILOSOPHY
AND LITERATURE

Rodolphe
BY ALEXANDER VINET, 1797-1847
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SECOND EDITION

ALEXANDER STRAHAN, PUBLISHER

56 LUDGATE HILL, LONDON

1867

Philosophy
Literature

Astié, Jean Frédéric, 1822-1894, ed.

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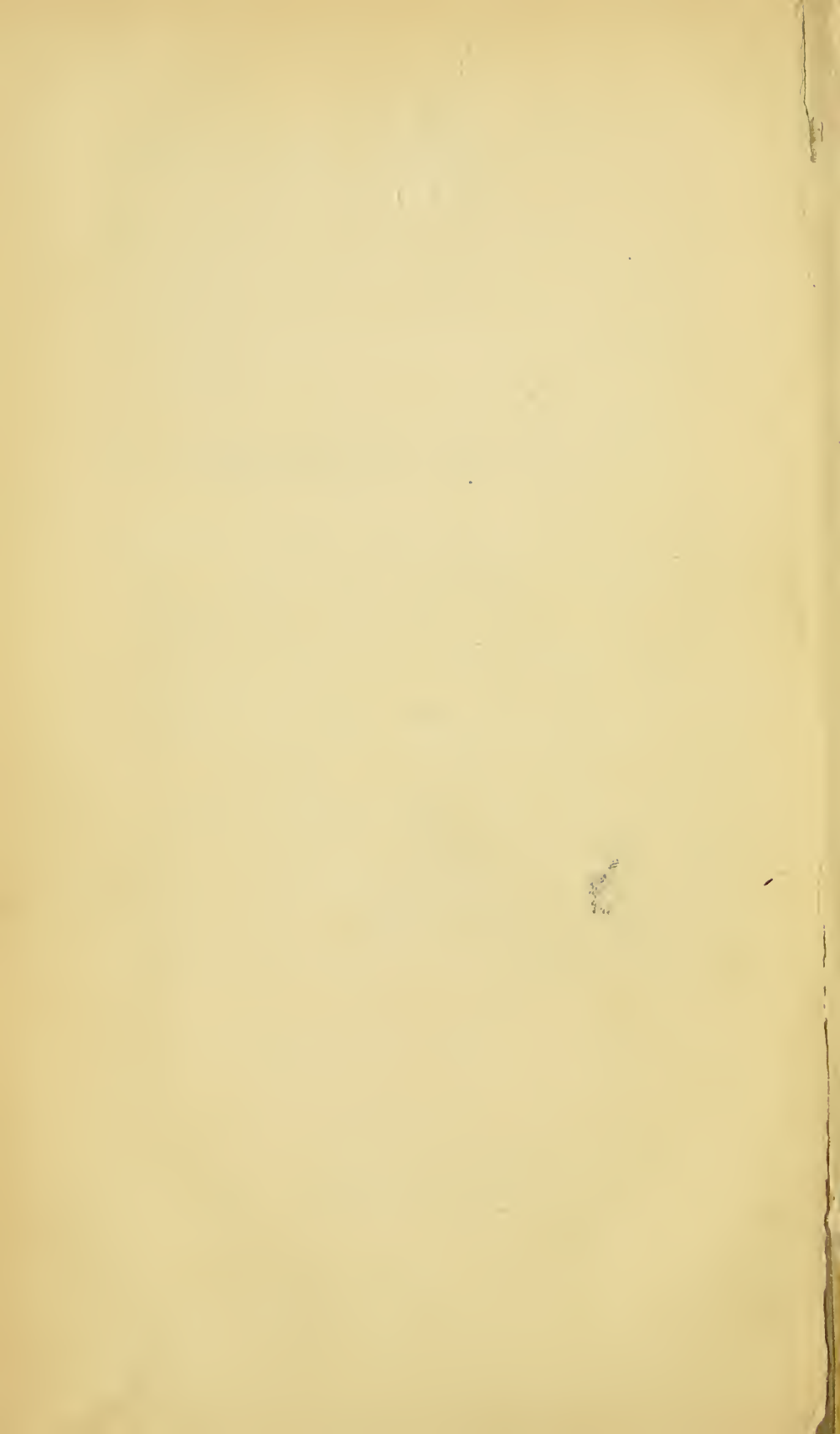
Access. April 5, 1929

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NOTE BY THE PUBLISHER.

THE reader will bear in mind that this volume is composed of extracts from the various works of M. Vinet. These extracts are very skilfully put together by the Editor, M. Astié; but in a book thus constructed, some instances of repetition and of abrupt transition are unavoidable. If even there should be a slight discrepancy between passages brought from different works into an unintended proximity, the reputation of M. Vinet, a writer distinguished for his clearness of style, ought not to suffer from this.



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OUTLINES OF PHILOSOPHY
AND LITERATURE



FIRST SECTION.
PURE PHILOSOPHY.

INTRODUCTION.

I.—REASON.

Different acceptations of the word—Value and province of Reason.

REASON, which was originally truth in the object, almost as soon came to signify truth in the subject. In this sense every man is under absolute obligations towards reason; it is for him the supreme authority on all subjects; for how should he deny the nature of things? To whom could he appeal from the nature of things? There is, therefore, a sense in which we are right in saying that we must refer solely to reason, that is to facts, to what is, to truth. And so far as *our subjective* reason in its primary elements is also a fact, a nature of things, there is the same necessity in a certain sphere of thought to believe in *our* reason; I mean the reason of humanity in its first and irresistible premises.

Reason cannot, in an absolute sense, be opposed

to reason. It is plain that if reason be capable of nothing, it is not even capable of proving its own impotence. If it demonstrates that it is nothing, it must have some power of demonstration.

We are wrong in speaking of reason misled, reason corrupted. In itself it does not get corrupted. It is the elements on which reason operates that are corrupt. But it is also true that just as reason alone cannot pervert, so neither can it redress alone; the results that we expect from it depend upon its first premises.

Reason has only one principle, but it has more than one voice; there is the logic of all the world, and there is the logic of genius.

Reason is not the efficient cause of any of the sentiments that may arise within us: all that it can do is to lead us into the presence of facts; it then retires, and it belongs to those facts to modify us.

Conscience and reason accept truth, and do not create it; truth is given—given as a sovereign fact, as a divine thought, not as a deduction of our intellect; given as a fact that our faculties are to elaborate and explore, but would never have discovered. In a word, reason and conscience are the touchstones of truth, and not, as in other spheres, the very source of truth.

Human reason is a great and beautiful thing, and probably the ruins by which it is surrounded—ruins of an innocence which it dominates and cannot restore—make it seem still greater; but what is it in

the presence of the Divine reason? what appreciable and definitive superiority can it confer upon those who devote themselves to its culture over those who have not the leisure to do so? Of what real use is it if it do not lead us to feel the want of a higher reason, if it do not thrill at the very idea of seeing itself completed, and in certain respects replaced, by the Divine reason?

The fallen nature of man has far more perverted reason than reason has perverted nature. But, at the same time, just as reason alone could not pervert, so neither can reason alone redress. It is not an inflexible, infallible, and constant rule.

Because every truth does not necessarily and instantaneously obtain the adherence of every man, it is concluded that reason is nothing, either for him in behalf of whom a demonstration is attempted, or for him who attempts it. But this conclusion could never have been arrived at without previous reasoning. Reasoning has preceded the abandonment of reasoning; faith in reason has preceded the denial of reason. There is nothing more ancient than confidence in individual reason; there is no more universal conviction;—can the partisans of common sense cite any other more widely diffused?

Reason recognises, compares, combines facts; it creates none. Facts are its fatal limit. It is not the creator omnipotent, it is only omnipotent in creation.

II.—TRUTH.

1. *Its definition ; its absolute and inflexible character—
Truth and Truths.*

What is truth for man? Is it the knowledge of all things? This has been affirmed, at least implicitly, and this we deny. Truth for man is human truth; a truth proportioned to his nature. Truth for him is a faithful representation of things, with regard to which he has been endowed with the means of knowledge. The limits of his knowledge are the limits of his nature. To wish to overleap these limits is to rise in rebellion against our own nature.

We have got accustomed in society to give too special and narrow a limit to the word truth. It is generally looked upon as only the conformity of the representation to the thing represented; but truth may reside in facts as well as ideas. The conformity of the means with the end, of the action with the principle, the life with the idea, this too is truth: what we call virtue is nothing else than truth in sentiment and action. In moral matters truth is not separated from life: truth is life, and if it remain in the thoughts instead of passing into the life, it does not deserve its name. When it is asked whether I am in the truth, the question does not refer to what I know, but what I am.

Truth is the most absolute thing in the world: we do not say the truth of my country, of my school, of

my time; for truth subjects to itself all countries, all schools, and all times.

Truth is, from its very nature, inflexible; it opens out a career which we must follow to the end, or not even enter upon. There where the road becomes dangerous (and there is always a point where it does so), the majority retrace their steps, but the lover of truth pursues his journey; he knows that there is no victory and no prize except at the end of his course.

Every truth joins on to some other that continues it; and this, as truth, joins itself to some other again: thus it proceeds in every direction to the infinite, while error, joining on to nothing, stops short in darkness, and dies on the road.

Every power, as well as every truth, reveals an antithesis; and in the moral and intellectual world every spark results from a collision.

The peculiarity of truth should be to make two extremes tend towards and blend in each other. Must we then, whether owing to dialectics or simple idleness of mind, be always and incurably sectarian?

Each sphere of truth is guarded by a sphinx, armed with an enigma, and ready to devour the imprudent wight who takes it up and does not guess it. Each of these enigmas has for its point the reconciling of *two contradictory truths*,—an expression which contains a paradox; but this very paradox sums up our whole destiny.

All truths are but the different aspects, or different applications, of one and the same truth.

In the labours of thought everything impels us towards the infinite,—that vast ocean into which reason without a guide plunges and loses itself. All questions, well understood, are but fragments or parts of the great problem, and we cannot take up one without taking up all.

The truth of each idea lies only in its combination with other ideas.

In many subjects the elements of truth exist; nothing is obscure, nothing wanting, excepting the eye that shall bring these elements, like two fragments of a torn manuscript, into juxtaposition.

A special, isolated truth, to which has been committed the direction of a whole life, necessarily extends itself over that whole life—exaggerates itself, so to speak, and, improperly applied, ceases to be truth. Isolated, it has neither self-comprehension nor self-control; like a single word preserved out of an effaced phrase, it gives no meaning, it teaches nothing. This is because in morality truth is one. Before the central point where all special truths converge be seized, not even those truths are possessed; at all events, no legitimate and certain use can be made of them.

There must be a key to all problems—a primary knowledge, by means of which all is known. Truth is one since man is one; truth is one, or has no existence.

Man unaided has never met more than a part of truth.

2. *Truth—Falsehood—Error.*

Man has never deceived himself utterly; in his grossest errors some shred of truth remains.

We cannot disabuse of any error, save by extending a hand to it on that side by which it is truth; for every error has a true side, and sympathy is the first condition of a useful reprimand.

Truth in general is a good, error an evil; falsehood spread, authorised in society, wrongly considered an oil that is to soften its springs, moderate its friction, and render its motion less creaking, is, on the contrary, a rust that corrodes it: falsehood is of all things the most anti-social.

When we are wrong, we are never half-wrong; and the logic of error is more inflexible than that of truth.

Happily for us, and whether we will it or no, error always stops short half-way. Perfect consistency is only permitted to truth.

“When we are right,” says a celebrated man, “we are always more right than we believe,” which is tantamount to saying that when we believe a true thing we never believe it enough, never trust to it enough; consequently, never see all that may be urged in its favour, even dare not see it.

We cannot merely take whether of truth or error in proportion to our will or our taste. Error, like truth, is bound to be consistent. It may indeed stop half-way if it will, but for all that, the conclusion it tries to avoid is involved already in its pre-

mises; the conclusion must be imputed to whoever lays down those premises.

No falsehood is barren: error is logical as well as truth. A false principle inserted in the laws dyes with its own hue the aggregate of institutions and manners, the whole mass of a people. A materialistic law does not need to be executed in order to be fatal; it is enough that it exists. The people who have made it, or allowed it to be made, has thereby inoculated itself with a mortal poison: principles so soon as they are adopted become facts.

It is only truth that is fruitful; it is only—if we may venture thus to express ourselves—truth that is real, that is to say, that can produce real results. Every system that rests on a fiction, on an unreality, can but lead into a defile whence there is no issue, and in its tortuous progress reach the right road only to cross it in various directions, but without stopping at or following it.

It is only moderate errors that are formidable.

3. *Truth—Beauty—Happiness.*

Security, abundance, order, peace, are, no less than certainty and hope, the fruits of truth. No good thing is absolutely lacking to us; all we want is to know our blessings. It is ignorance and error that make us unhappy; it is in knowledge that we are poor. Truth will enrich us: truth is another name for happiness.

All that appears to us beautiful is not, I confess,

good ; but God has willed that all that is good should be beautiful, and originally these two things had only one name. Beauty is a part, a form of truth.

III.—PHILOSOPHY.

1. *Its definition, disinterested nature, and mission.*

The great name Philosophy, of which the meaning has so much varied, is familiarly applied now-a-days to every chain of ideas that runs in a chain of facts. It is evident that the word *idea* is to be taken here in a quite objective sense, and that we are not treating of ideas conceived by this or that mind (which would still be facts), but of those which are included in facts, and expressed, as it were, by submitting those facts to pressure. An idea is, however, the idea of some one ; and to tell according to what general law, or in what direction the course of events tends, is to tell the ideas of some one who dominates things as a whole, is to affirm God.

Philosophy has the observations of phenomena for its starting point, and for its goal the assignation of them to principles more and more general, to laws, and, were it possible, to one only law, which would have to be sought for between the Divine will and secondary laws. Philosophy, in its various applications, embraces matter, spirit, morals, our social relations, our relation to the infinite, and the production of the beautiful in art.

The object of all truly scientific study is to find the immutable in the mutable. This in itself is to say that such a study, although far from repudiating immediate utility, cannot make it an end.

Philosophy, taken in its greatest simplicity, is only an elevated good sense, which, not pretending to know everything, is bent upon knowing well those objects the knowledge of which has not been denied to it. Names and appearances are nothing to it; prejudice forms the basis of none of its judgments; number and time cannot in its eyes transform error into truth; it neither believes nor denies anything by chance or lightly; not trusting to a first glance, it seeks for difference beneath similarity, and similarity beneath difference, alternately uniting what the vulgar separate, and separating what they unite. While all facts are isolated to the inattentive eye, they bind and connect themselves beneath the gaze of philosophy, which, following as far as it can the chain that unites them, attaching itself in everything to the essential and rejecting the purely accidental, comes to recognise one same nature, same principle, same origin in objects that at first seemed to have nothing in common; and thus it reduces the innumerable facts of the moral and physical order to a small number of thoughts, and these to a smaller number still, gravitating towards the unity that it will never reach, but towards which a mysterious force ever constrains it to aspire. In a word, philosophy differs from common reason in that it applies itself to penetrating

through the exterior or hull of things to their principle, or at least to that idea which shall of itself explain the greatest possible number of facts, and before which philosophy, fault of breath, perforce halts. Where must it halt? What is its legitimate sphere? This question is more important to it than any other. Philosophy does itself no less honour in recognising its boundaries than in extending its inquiries. It reigns in this apparent abdication; it is its glory to know how to limit itself, as in the moral sphere it is the glory of the will to be able to stop short in season and to practice self-control. But that philosophy may know what it can and cannot do, it measures its means with its end, and being unable to place all its greatness in verifying its knowledge, it places some of it in verifying its ignorance, and, so to speak, "in knowing certainly that it does not know."

2. *Its limited sphere—Philosophy and Tradition.*

To *philosophise* is essential to the condition of the man who has not yet been taught by the Gospel to ignore. Unity—that need of the human mind—will torment it so long as, being a stranger to the most excellent of all unities, it shall seek outside of itself the order it does not find within. In this sense the last word of philosophy is not spoken, and never will be. Never will this torment of the mind come to an end save for those who, enlightened by revelation,

have learnt to say, "Secret things belong to the Lord, but the things that are revealed belong to us and our children."

If philosophy as a science does not inspire us with very much confidence as far as the great problems of life are concerned, it is otherwise with philosophy as a method, or with the philosophic spirit.

Philosophy calls itself the independence and the sovereignty of the human mind, and looks upon tradition as its bondage and degradation. But neither of the two consider that their forces combined will be found too much for so gigantic a task as the uprooting of this great tree, or even its pruning; and consequently it costs them little to conquer their mutual repugnance; philosophy leaning willingly on tradition, tradition willingly referring to philosophy—that is to say, philosophy not disdaining to share the prejudices of the multitude, and the multitude not refusing to borrow some arguments from philosophy. At Colosse, heresy had this double character—it was a compound of subtle reasoning and unauthoritative precedent: against the plenitude of Jesus Christ there was alleged both a pretended nature of things and the opinion of doctors.

Might not philosophy be called the treadmill of the human mind?

CHAPTER II.

METAPHYSICS.

I.—PSYCHOLOGY.

1. *Psychological principles: Soul and Body—Appetites—Affections—Speculative and religious element.*

THE union of the soul and the body appears to me essential and indissoluble. Man without a body is, in my opinion, man no longer; and God has thought and willed him embodied, and not otherwise. We may remark, that God in the first place formed *man* of the dust of the earth (he was, therefore, man already); *then* he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and that being who was beforehand man became a living soul. According to this passage we cannot doubt that the body, or *a* body, is essential to human personality, and to the very idea of man. But it is also said that dust returns to dust, and the spirit to God who gave it. The spirit is here represented as the whole of man, because the body, as we see it, is in fact only a condition of his existence: the corporeal principle, the invisible form of the body, endures; man remains in death indissolubly body

and soul; the body that we see decay, and which we call the envelope of the soul, is also the envelope of the true and imperishable body. The union continues through the apparent separation; but although perpetual, it is nevertheless only a union, not a unity; the spirit is not body, nor the body spirit; otherwise we could not stop there, we should have—leaving human existence and embracing the whole universe in thought—to say, that there, too, body and spirit are but one, that there is one only existence, one only being; we should no longer be able to affirm that spirit moves and dominates the world, but that the world is spirit and spirit the world, that matter is eternal, and that God has not created.

Who, then, can comprehend matter without mind, or explain the material infinite, except by the spiritual infinite? That such ideas should ever have been treated as paradoxical is one of the greatest signs of our fall, for they are the first *postulate* of all thought, and, if I may so say, the primary reasons of our reason. We are more creatures of spirit than of matter, and of the infinite than the finite.

Man has to be born in physical destitution that his mind may the better feel the moral power that shall grow later: the manger of the Lord is for all—it is the image of the flesh.

Appetites are tendencies in man to subordinate to himself whatever is not that self; to concentrate himself in self, and to become his own end.

Appetite is the desire of happiness under all its

forms; under the form of fear as well as that of hope.

Affection is the impression that, according to our nature, we receive from objects. An abundant source of activity, it is nevertheless passive. It remains asleep or dead until some other element awakens it. We might have called it *passion* if we had not feared to cast an unjust slur upon it. We distinguish between two kinds of affection. To the first class belong compassion, sympathy, general benevolence—affections which have been admirably designated by the name of humanity. These are virtual, for special occasions are required to give us the consciousness of them. The affections of the second class, on the contrary, once aroused become the permanent spring of our life; these are our various loves, friendships, patriotism, and lastly, the love we distinguish by no epithet.

Speculative Elements.—The speculative elements of human life belong exclusively to that part of ourself which *sees* and *perceives*, and would never wish to do anything but *see* and *perceive*—in a word, *speculate*. Appetite, affection, duty, sociability, positively require action. Speculation, on the contrary, requires nothing; it is its own end; it is *scientific*, inasmuch as it occupies itself solely with collecting and verifying facts, as it is *philosophic* when it searches for their primary idea. It is *poetic* when, through the real, it pursues the ideal; guided by that esthetic conscience which keeps the impress and memory of the

beautiful, as the moral conscience does of the good; the living exemplar of a world where all facts should be types. The ideal has its place in every mind, but there are but few who possess their thought in distinct form.

Lastly, there are in man elements of a mixed nature. One word names them—the word religion. Faith itself is a moral state, a work, a virtue. Worship has the same character. To adore doubtless is to contemplate, but is not prayer the most active of our actions? In no sphere is the conjunction of these two forces so completely brought about; nothing calls forth so sonorous a harmony between the different chords of the human lyre.

Speech, labour, the family, and the law, are the four pillars on which man is based both before and after the fall: same foundations, same characteristics.

Life belongs to that portion of our being which obeys, hopes, and loves.

2. *Sentiments : Instinct—Good Sense—Sensibility—Candour and Sympathy—Enthusiasm—Admiration—Serenity—Intimacy—Affection.*

Instinct is but a mathematical point, capable of taking the most opposite directions when prolonged.

The most noble instincts are not by themselves able to secure our steps here below, and in order to attain its perfectionment and true value our soul needs the discipline of sorrow and of duty.

Good sense cannot suffice for everything, though unfortunately it pretends to do so.

Good sense, in all times, is upon certain subjects both very bold and very new. On these subjects it is much rarer than intellect, nay, at certain moments, it even borders upon genius. Sometimes genius is needed to attain to good sense. Some of the greatest revolutions that have marked the progress of the human mind have only been the reinstatement of good sense.

Nothing is so new as pure good sense ; for even in those who appear its heroes or its oracles, it is covered over, if not with a layer, with at least a fine dust of prejudice.

We all stumble in different ways, and nevertheless this world, all made up of men deprived in a measure of sense, is divisible into men who have good sense and men who have it not ; what does this come to but to saying that we must draw a distinction between different spheres ? There is one in which, without lack of good sense, all the world makes mistakes, all the world talks nonsense, and often superior minds do so more than any others, because they take up a greater number of questions, and because prejudice—that nursery rhyme with which children are put to sleep—does not suffice them. But good sense—that correct sentiment, that tact of reality—brings back superior minds, and does not bring back others.

He who has only received impressions without ever correcting them, has not lived.

Sensibility is far more an element or a condition of good sense than its enemy. *Good sense* (take note of the phrase) is a *sense*, a sentiment, a just sentiment of reality. And without confounding it with sensibility, may we not pronounce the maxim a strange one which insists upon a cold heart being essential to a judicious mind? Might it not be as well said that in order to judge correctly of external objects we ought to have dull hearing, short sight, and a gloved hand? Passion dazzles, sensibility enlightens; the heart is a light.

We often see men endowed with keen natural sensibility arrive at a kind of hardness as they advance in years.

Nothing touches us so much as a fervent expression on the part of a man who, from a sense of duty, is sparing of such.

Sensibility, of which so many would make a virtue, is after all only a talent.

Sentimentality is, perhaps, to sentiment much what mysticism is to religion, a something more delicate and intimate, more dreamy and vague, a shadow of mystery, a reflex of infinity thrown over our affections; a soft and timid chord which gradually swells out of silence to form a harmony with the principal chord already struck. This mysticism of emotion is perhaps its sensuality as well, and too often true sensibility melts and runs off into these passive delights, these effeminate self-indulgences of the soul.

Candour is to the soul what spontaneity is to the mind; when one is candid one cannot fail to be pro-

found. The expressions of children are often most profound. It is certain, that to an upright mind all things present themselves more purely, being unembarrassed by formulæ, provided only that such a mind combine force with uprightness.

Candour on certain subjects is very like audacity.

Sympathy is the gift of identifying oneself with all sentiments, entering into all situations, however opposed to our own the former may be, however foreign the latter; sometimes, indeed, all the more when there is contrast than when there is harmony. This gift does not of itself constitute a talent for dramatic poetry, but it is the condition and basis of it. It almost suffices alone for eloquence, and gives charm and power to the lessons of the moralist.

Two causes render the mind penetrating, sympathy and antipathy, benevolence and malevolence; what there is of best in the soul and of most acrid in the character: but the penetration of love is perhaps the most searching and profound. Hatred is penetrating, indeed, but it is also purblind; not only does it preclude from seeing what is, but it makes us see what is not.

Even hatred itself does not exclude a sort of sympathy, and the unhappy penetration with which it seems endowed depends in great part upon this.

Sympathy is that intelligence of the soul, that mysterious gift of identification with all existence, that intimate and rapid logic, by means of which we divine the secret of every individuality, whether personal or collective.

Suspicion may from time to time have certain advantages in the dealings of life; it has occasionally talent, but then it has too much, and overshoots the mark it aims at. Sympathy, on the contrary, is the first condition of true penetration; it is by it alone that we get at the heart of the situation and discern its secret recesses, and above all its approaches.

Grace has so much in common with sweetness of disposition and of manners, that one is almost surprised when a graceful spirit is not allied with benevolence of character.

I believe that whatever subordinates our whole life to a thought, a pursuit, the object of which promises nothing to our egotism or to our passions, may claim the name of enthusiasm.

Does a soul that feels an enthusiasm for what is vulgar differ essentially from a vulgar soul? This is a question, and I, for one, feel disposed to answer it affirmatively. I deplore deplorable aberrations, and a prodigality so irrational; but I cannot, as a general rule, deny value of some kind to a passion which has nothing selfish, nothing at least grossly selfish about it.

But I may be permitted to prefer the enthusiasm that does not mislead to that which does—the enthusiasm that elevates to that which degrades. I will go further: although both the one and the other reveal in the soul the same want, the same principle, I cannot help attributing more value to the soul

capable of the first enthusiasm than to the soul susceptible merely of the last—to the moral being which yearns towards the true infinite, than to the one which rushes towards the finite disguised as the infinite. I recognise, as does Pascal, three orders of greatness, the moral, the intellectual, and the material; and between the first and second of these I measure an infinitely greater distance than between the second and third.

What difference is there sometimes between enthusiasm and pedantry? Can you possibly tell me? And yet I am at the same time carefully putting aside those elements which, mingling with enthusiasm, would transform it into fanaticism.

Enthusiasm for what is great lies at the basis of our nature, and never makes itself so keenly felt as in childhood. It is the flower and the poetry of virtue that fills the imagination of children and enchants them. Later the flower falls to give place to the fruit, poetry becomes prose. The fair dreams of virtue resemble those high mountains whose bold shapes attract our gaze, and to the summit of which imagination raises itself without effort. But when it comes to climbing them in reality, slowly and laboriously, we are soon discouraged. Life is not spent on the heights where grand and sublime actions are accomplished; virtue is composed of a long and uninterrupted series of small sacrifices, and requires that firm and tranquil resolution which does not run after duty, but holds itself ready for whatever God shall impose.

The soul is soon satiated with what is untrue, and then disgust is proportioned to enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm corresponds with the infinite; but sometimes it addresses itself really to the infinite, and sometimes it cheats its own wants, and deceives its own principles, in lending to finite objects the character and privileges of the infinite. Ancient Egypt used to deify an ox, or even the vegetables of its garden; we in one way do the same.

Admiration and enthusiasm tacitly contain an avowal of inferiority.

Admiration becomes youth, and gratitude all ages.

Is it true that admiration and renown prevent affection? that we love less in proportion as we admire more?

The pleasure of finding fault is a poor pleasure; that of admiring is as keen as it is pure.

I would not venture to affirm that all minds of the first order have been serene; but the majority and the greatest among them have possessed this high quality. Greatness is serene, sublime, peaceful. Just as there is in the atmosphere a limpid zone which clouds do not enter, so in the moral world there is a region that storms cannot trouble, or into which at least they but rarely penetrate.

Intimacy and ease only spring up in the domain of the immaterial. The thought of the Infinite is the closest of all bonds; and two souls can only interpenetrate and blend in God.

Between strong and congenial natures intimacy

soon brings about familiarity; that is, the decorous and noble freedom which well becomes brothers. Familiarity has such great advantages that we must needs take measures to establish it where it does not come of itself.

It is not by the intellect that two beings touch; they might communicate thus for years without becoming intimate; but the heart is the true *me* in each man, since it is his heart, or the employment of his heart, which constitutes his worth in the judgment of men, and classifies him eternally in the judgment of God. Now the heart is inexhaustible.

Man numbers the want to be a father and a husband amongst his moral wants, and there are men whose life is not complete unless they have been able to love some one or other with a paternal love; such give themselves sons by adoption, who are the sons of their soul, but as completely sons as though they had been begotten. There are affections that become paternal, and others which, in virtue of the moral nature of those who feel them, become conjugal: souls too marry, souls too beget children. Everything is not material; everything is not instinct and habit in these holy relations.

3. *Facts: Character and Will—Imitation and Habits—Universality—Genius, Talent, Work—Contemplations and Observations—Youth.*

When one is really anything one is so always;

and if even we wished to efface this original impress we should still be powerless to do so ; but by willing oneself to be thus, by contemplating oneself as such, one exaggerates oneself, and roots oneself more firmly in one's peculiar faults.

A man is strong only when he has in his character some strongly marked antithesis. A faculty without the opposite faculty is not a power ; it is a subjection : there is no true 'power except a self-contained one, and we can only contain and rule ourselves inso-much as one of our faculties is balanced by its opposite ; that alone completes which acts as a counterpoise.

There are certain games in which an object is only kept in equilibrium by a rapid and continuous movement ; this is an image of certain characters.

But sometimes a character is conquered and neutralised in certain points by means of the character itself ; and it may also be so by the influence of a fact producing a dominant affection. We may apply this to the phenomenon of conversion. I do not here speak of the conversion of the mind, but of the true conversion, of that of the heart, the result of an affection which gives a new life to the soul. This conversion can only be accomplished by a fact, not an idea. The pardon of God accepted by the heart can alone produce such a revolution. Nevertheless, the pristine forces of the moral being subsist still, inas-much as they are compatible with this affection. If the idea absorbed the man, and identified him with it, there would be an end of his individuality

of character. A perfectly holy creature would have no character in the ordinary sense of the word. His whole soul would tend to God; his whole being would be disposed to identify itself with the Divine nature. Holiness is the very character of God; Jesus Christ has no character; his individuality, if I may venture to use this term, is *nil* outside of the perfections that we attribute to the Divinity. It is otherwise with the apostles; in them we meet again with individuality, though, as it appears to me, it is least marked in St. John. In one sense, perhaps, he is no nearer perfect holiness than his colleagues; in another, however, his individual character is as it were lost, absorbed, annulled in the living impression of Jesus Christ.

A character is the collective product, the moral unity, resulting from a combination of dispositions in one and the same subject, whether humanity, people, or individuals. I know, indeed, that the most common idea is that of determining character according to action: it seems natural at the first glance to recognise the tree by its fruit. This method, however, may fail to lead us to the truth, so considerable is the influence of external circumstances on our actions. Character can only be immediately deduced from action under certain rules and certain reservations. The aggregate of actions—the life, in a word—resembles an ample drapery thrown over a statue: it indicates its form in a general way; but for all that, much reflection and much art would be requisite to draw with exactness the body thus covered. But do not

vices and virtues, it may be asked, enable us to judge of a character? We answer, that in an absolute manner they do not. Considered nakedly and in themselves they are not the character; vices may have been contracted, and virtues too, by influences, not solely derived from character.

Character is composed of distinct, prominent, permanent features, which reveal themselves throughout the whole duration of a life, and determine and explain it as a whole. These features are affections, but simple, elementary ones, neither compounded nor derived. In order to discover their primary elements we should have, I believe, to study them, and as it were catch them alive in young children. Later on, how much life may transform itself by its natural propensities!

Character is an organism of affections which act on each other in such manner that the aggregate, the unity, which springs from their combination shall not be a sum total, but a result. It is with it as with chemistry, the elements of which reduce themselves to a very small number of simple substances, which, by their blending, create other substances that are new and individual, but no longer elementary.

A great theatre is not always assigned to great characters and great minds; the most eminent have not always the power, and sometimes even they have not the will, to enlarge their sphere of action. There are consequently more great men than appear or are supposed, which does not however mean that there are many.

All the world helps him who helps himself.

A soul only wills one thing at a time.

We must belong to ourselves before we can give ourselves away.

Nothing in human society so rare as people who know how to will: the world is full of good intentions, but all these good intentions put together are not worth one single will. I *wish* leads to nothing; I *will* is alone efficacious. It sometimes seems as though firmly *willing* sufficed to itself, and could dispense with means. The fact is, it creates them; it educes them from out the most unfavourable circumstances: this is because it has been given to will to modify the world, as it belongs to the *Word* to create it. Two immaterial forces have given rise to all that is.

Will, of itself alone, has created results which apparently appertained only to wealth or genius. It forcibly associates in all its designs weaker but more enlightened wills. Genius without will has created fewer marvels than will without genius.

The one thing important as rare, is will; it is this which invents and multiplies means; which renders weakness strong and poverty rich; which, in short, creative in its way, can make nothingness fertile, and call things which were not as though they were.

There are wills so sluggish, natures so inert, that a mass alone is capable of detaching them from the soil; but once so detached they move with a rapidity proportioned to their previous inertia.

Imitation and habit are two forms of obedience.

Imitation subjects us to the example of others ; habit binds us to our own actions, and chains our present to our past. These are in themselves two passive dispositions, the power of which we can more or less evade, but never absolutely deny, and without which it is doubtful that society could endure, even if without them society could ever have formed itself.

Man is in one sense a bundle of habits ; but this expression needs explanation. Without a counterpoise it is certain that habit crushes intelligence and moral liberty ; it is therefore necessary, before all, that man should possess principles, virtues, affections. Habit is not in itself the full and nutritious ear of corn ; it is merely the tie that binds the sheaf together and prevents its scattering. Nothing regulates the mind so much as a life internally submitted to rule, however agitated by external events. The soul may preserve its equilibrium in the midst of shocks and vicissitudes, but it must infallibly lose it in the vagrancy of an aimless existence, unbridled by education, and whose irregularities have given free scope to the caprices of imagination.

Habit is only truly good as a complement.

There are cases where we may even consider ourselves happy to meet, in the place of absent good, with a habit which is not absolutely evil, and which diverts from it. This is especially felt in national life.

The same agent that is worthless as a monarch may be precious as a minister. Habit enlisted in

the service of good is one of the great forces of our feebleness. There is perhaps no will so strong, no conscience so constantly on the alert, as to be able positively to dispense with it. Indeed it might not be always possible, with regard to each of our actions, to refer to a sentiment that inspires, or a reason that dictates. It is said that to scale mountains is easy to love: but even love has its moments of lassitude, and in these habit draws us along the gentle incline that it has formed. Nay, who knows if habit be not a subordinate element of love itself? What is certain is, that affection is the starting point of habit.

Habit does not replace goodness, but goodness can hardly dispense with habit.

In one sense universality is always rare; and moreover, there is more than one kind. There is a certain universal capacity which we might as well call universal incapacity. In all cases the universality of talent is as much a chimera as universal monarchy. This, in its full extent, would be the creative faculty, which can never have been conferred on any one, and of which history furnishes no example. Talent supposes individuality, and the notion of individuality implies that of limitation: we are as much individualised by what we lack as by what we possess. Sometimes there is even a disjunction between the most analogous and proximate styles: a man may excel in satire and be worth nothing in epigram. But we are speaking here of universality of intellect of the gift of understanding all subjects,

and speaking on all without falling into absurdity. At a certain elevation of genius this universality is possessed; Leibnitz, Haller, Bacon, dominate all spheres of thought. There is another less glorious and yet rare and precious universality, such as that of Fontenelle. He does not include in his grasp the whole aggregate of human faculties, but he has a clear and easy insight into all things, and has cultivated a great many.

In all things economy is the mother of liberality. Another element of wisdom, and, if I may so speak, one of the marks of the philosophic character, is to know how, without dispersing oneself imprudently, to depart on occasion from one's own profession or career. I delight in the man of special pursuit who generalises; in the meditative man, led by the desire to oblige, even in the most commonplace way, who gives up his meditation-begun hymn, and separates himself from it with a sigh, perhaps, but without hesitation.

In general, the life of almost all of us is an abstraction; in order the better to be the man of a certain position, or a certain character, each of us ceases to be man; the species prevails over the genius: the artist is artist; the theologian theologian; the politician politician: now, what is wanted, is that each man should, as it were, be all men at once. Human life is only true on these terms. It will be understood in what sense we say this, after having said elsewhere (as you may perhaps remember), that one can only be anything in this world on condition of not being everything.

A man who is at once superior and complete may, nevertheless, only rank in the second class, and yet his merit be the rarest of all merits.

There are facile geniuses, and there are laborious ; and we do not sufficiently recognise the advantages of the latter, nor the burden that weighs on the former. They are limited by their very facility, of which they never make all the use they might ; while effort impels the latter far beyond the limits that seemed to have been assigned them. I speak here of art and perfection. In human affairs, where quickness is so great a point, results are often assured to facile talent.

Never has a man's genius guessed the whole of a science ; never has genius absolutely supplied the place of observation or experience.

Talent is the paper money of genius ; genius alone is not easy to negotiate. Everywhere, and above all in France, talent is necessary to genius.

Patience, whatever Buffon may have said, is not genius ; but genius, devoid of the assistance of patience, does not reach its proper height.

Every man of genius has a fixed idea which blends, and always will blend, with everything he does ; whatever melody he sings, the same motive—now distinct, now disguised—runs and murmurs throughout the musical work ; and what, indeed, is the whole inner life, whether of the artist or the man, but a more or less copious variation on one given motive ? But in proportion as genius becomes impoverished or embarrassed the fixed idea becomes more prominent, the

motive is more distinctly observable; and those numberless musical intentions which, like bushy and flexible foliage, twined around it, becoming gradually more and more sparse, allow it to appear alone in its stiffness and monotony.

It is with genius as with the bird, when once impregnated by thought the result is lifelong; but the first eggs alone enclose a living germ, a future inhabitant of air; those that come later are also eggs, no doubt, but the mother's downy breast warms them in vain; they can produce nothing living; they do not multiply the bird: *prolem sine patre creatam*.

Talent does not consist in overlaying a subject with foreign spoils, but in drawing out of it all that it had really contained, unknown to any one.

Talent may seduce, it may render everything specious to prejudiced eyes, but in itself it proves nothing.

Talent cannot replace instruction. There is no more treacherous hope than that which a man founds on the consciousness of his talent. Nothing can be more rapid than his downfall unless he support his talent by acquired funds. Many distinguished natural gifts have been wholly lost, while second-rate talents have, by labour and industry, arrived at results which seemed reserved for genius alone.

The most powerful ideas, lacking a common bond, only impair each other, and this in proportion to their strength. Minds must be singularly strong indeed to turn to profit what is not one, or does not of itself

reduce itself to unity. Struck in turn by a crowd of impressions that neutralise each other, they are captivated by none and fix to nothing.

However powerful genius may be, it is weak against the soul when the soul has not lost the habit of living, or when an individual religion, uniting itself to the most sensitive portion of the conscience, has given it all independences in one single dependence, and the most precious of liberties in the most glorious of servitudes.

The economy of time is the principal element of all great successes and all glories.

Under whatever aspect we may view the question, work—activity if you will—is an element of success, and we may believe that, given an equality of talent (since after all facility is not talent), the advantage will always be on the side of effort against facility.

Let us beware of confounding contemplation with observation. This last is an activity which takes possession of its object, which analyses and dissects it; in contemplation, on the other hand, we might say that it was the object itself which took possession of the soul and modified it.

Vagrant thoughts are always deleterious. Christianity makes us think, and not dream.

When nature has combined in the same man a very strong character and a meditative mind, we can hardly expect that the soul will take the side of the mind against itself. The legal expression of the dead

carrying it against the living finds no application here. When life is energetic it subjects thought to itself. Whether at the onset or in the course of speculation, the soul, always present and always attentive to its interests, contrives to gain its suit.

Exclusively contemplative lives are not necessarily the most internal, the most profound, the most true; neither do lives exclusively of action, even were this action entirely of thought, possess all these advantages. To live with oneself is not to think; and to act is not essentially a getting out of self.

Youth has for its portion all audacities, even the most just and most holy. These are necessary things that would never be done if youth did not do them: mature age may continue admirably, but it begins little.

Too often an unhappy childhood is the prelude and presage of a sad maturity.

What one has least of all in the years of early youth is a thought of one's own. We live, then, of the life of all the world; we have the spirit of our time, our party, our school; and although we may have, more than we ever shall again, the agreeable sense of self-dependence, it is nevertheless certain that this age is not that of really personal inspiration. Hence we may conclude that there is danger in presenting ourselves very early to the eyes of the public.

There are men who, taken possession of in youth by some great and powerful thought, carry it with them throughout the whole of life as a torch which

is to lighten its night, as well as that other darker and deeper night, the night of death. For all who believe, their faith itself is this idea; but within the range of a common faith many attach themselves to some particular aspect of the truth, in which the whole truth reflects itself, or from whence the whole truth is deducible.

Those who, between the ages of twenty-four and thirty-four, modify none of their opinions, are worthy of much admiration or much pity.

There is no age, there is no situation in which the only rule of the soul is quietly to follow its inclination. Reason insists upon whatever is human weighing and measuring itself: "We must not see, feel, hear everything."

The discipline most favourable to the freshness and health of the soul is a regulated and even an austere life. It is only strong souls who are susceptible of true tenderness. The life of the soul wears and dissipates itself in emotions which should only hold that place in existence that accent does in language. Who knows better how to love than the man of virtue and duty? For him at the decline of life there blooms a second youth better than the first, a fresher, though less lively youth than that of early years. The treasure of the heart carefully husbanded overflows then of itself. Confirmed in the right way, and sure of always walking therein, the eyes are permitted to glance over perspectives long denied them. We make haste, we thirst to live, we take our seats as new comers, full

of innocent and reverent wonder, at that banquet of life where so many have been seated from their dawn ; the soul, for once indulgent to itself, opens to all pure impressions, associates itself with all worthy tastes, sympathises with all noble aspirations, and this late youth puts to shame the precocious age of many souls, gifted perhaps by nature, that the abuse of emotions has reduced to premature impotence.

II.—LOGIC.

1. *Logic and Dialectics: Definition—Different kinds of Logic—Dangers attending its exclusive use.*

Logic is but one part, the formal and instrumental part, of truth. All truth is logical, insomuch as it is truth but there is a logic concealed in the very nature of truth, even when it does nothing but affirm or state itself ; and there is another, ostensible, advanced, actual, so to speak, the employment of which counts for much in the eloquence of *a discourse*: for to discourse and to reason are synonymous terms.

When we have given to logic the place of reason, we lose the very sense of elementary truths, and the very instincts of nature.

When you only possess a truth by a logical process it is pretty much the same with it as with a well-corded and well-sealed box, enclosing precious or delicious things, of which you have neither the sight nor the touch, which you cannot enjoy by any of your

senses. You may, indeed, affirm without untruth that you hold these, since you hold the box that contains them; but to speak thus is a virtual abuse of language.

Nothing so terrible as logic in irrationality.

Under an aspect more or less disguised, logic or reasoning pervades human speech. The most delicate logic is the law, and makes the beauty of the simplest narratives. Logic is at the root or in the nature of the most impetuous oratorical displays; and how, indeed, should it not be so, since our most instinctive and intimate impulses are mixed with logic? What else is a witticism often but a sally of logic? The finest things in every style are the expressions, or obey the law, of a superior logic; for exactness and inexactness are not the sole differences between one man's logic and another; there is a scientific or sublime logic, as there is a vulgar and superficial. Logic is often inspired or suggested by something better than itself, and as there are solid arguments, so there are touching arguments as well. Logic is not anterior to everything; it is preceded by facts and by the impressions that facts produce, though I do not mean to say that logic is always a stranger to the most apparently simple impressions. Sublime facts and influences render logic sublime, but it retains its character, and gives to discourse not only a particular form, but energy.

If logic may be defined as a necessity of the inner man, each element of our being has its logic, since

each contains the germ of a necessity. The heart and conscience have their logic as well as the understanding; for each of these portions of the inner man, so soon as a principle is acknowledged or felt, immediately claims its consequence as a sacred debt. Now when these three necessities concur on the same point; when, added the one to the other, they weigh on the will with the weight of the whole man, how should the will resist the whole man, or how should it not be absorbed beforehand in what wholly absorbs the man? This is tantamount to saying what the Christian preacher, armed with this triple logic, should become; what the vivacity of his language, the urgency of his appeals; with what force a doctrine, in which all the knots are so closely drawn, should lay hold of souls; of what importance that preaching must be which, by a happy necessity, includes in each discourse the whole counsel of God.

One in their principles, one in their aims, dialectics are not solely, however, the art or the talent of concluding; they have two forms or two applications: to distinguish, and to deduce, make up dialectics. Those even who would define them as consisting of the second of these processes, acknowledge that dialectics, considered as the art of proving, have their first condition or beginning in their exact and scientific decomposition of words. We only compose well after having decomposed.

We may be rigidly dialectical and yet lack good sense; and Pascal is right to distinguish, as he does

in two places, between the geometrical method and common sense.

Pascal holds that logic, which is an abstraction, may shake everything ; and further, he holds that in our present condition an unfortunate tendency inclines us to scepticism which does away with intuition, as well as to fatalism which does away with liberty, with this only difference, that the tendency to fatalism affects all men, while only thinkers are led away by that towards scepticism. He acknowledges that, in certain subjects of extreme importance, the weakening of intuition, and, above all, of moral intuition, affords a wide scope for the irruptions of logic, savage and implacable enemy, that pillages our best convictions, and seats itself with effrontery by our very hearth to count over the booty it has gained. Pascal considers that we only possess by a precarious title our most necessary and best founded beliefs ; that even their evidence does not guarantee them against the insults of doubt ; and that a great number of those things that we only believe with our souls are really not believed by us at all. Conviction and doubt are not only two attitudes of the mind, but two states of the soul ; and so long as the soul is not restored there will be many truths which we shall not believe firmly, or shall only believe with an inert faith, incapable of reacting against the assaults of logic. Now, God has not intended logic to govern human life, and its nobility consists not in believing upon proof, but believing without proof ; or if this language offends you,

believing upon other proofs than those of reasoning. Suppose a being made up only of intelligence, you may calculate that for that very reason he will be profoundly and incurably sceptical, and you may infer that men of whom logic is the habitual instrument—logic, as it were, the trade (a geometrician, for instance, like Pascal), will ill defend against abstract reason those truths the force of which lie not in being demonstrated but felt. If I do not feel that good is good and evil evil, who is there that can ever prove it to me ?

Pure dialectics neglect nature, or the substance of things. They stop short, so to speak, at a first stage, where the mind requires, and does not obtain, a fresh relay. There is a secret retreat into which they do not penetrate, nor of themselves have ever penetrated. It is given to philosophy to cross this mysterious threshold; but why? Because philosophy is something more than dialectics, which have been so often mistaken for it, and which are little more in relation to it than the bow is to the lyre.

It is difficult, moreover, when we give ourselves up to dialectics not to be led away into proving too much: by dint of rigidity we arrive at sophistry, and reasoning ends by banishing reason. This is singular, and at first hard to be understood.

When you apply figures or algebraical signs to measure or weigh a substance, you are sure that these signs, which have nothing substantial and are perfectly and in all cases identical with themselves, will not con-

duct you to a false result. It is not so with dialectics; they may lead you with imperturbable precision to consequences which, narrowly looked at, revolt you, and which you instinctively reject as the eye and the lungs do foreign substances. How comes this about? It is because, separated from their substance, a true and a false formula are equally indifferent to us, and thus, no internal repugnance warning us, we very easily mistake the relative for the absolute, one point of view for another, the shadow for the body, words for things. Both conversation and books are full of this *qui pro quo*. This does not happen in subjects which entirely relate to the intellect, and whose wholly abstract nature is perfectly simple and absolutely invariable; but nothing is easier, nothing more common, in subjects where the same word is necessarily susceptible of several ideas, and has not the character of figures or algebraical signs. In such subjects, unless we constantly hold fast the substance of the idea, we do not get the idea; we lose it on our way, and perhaps at the beginning of the way, much as (if such an illustration be permitted me) a postillion riding his horse and turning his back to the carriage, may chance to leave it on the road, and arrive at the journey's end with nothing behind him. This cannot happen in an algebraical calculation, where the separation of the sign and the thing signified never takes place—where the horse never leaves the car on the road. In reasoning upon moral matters, it is a condition of safety to keep incessantly

testing the substance of ideas, so as to assure ourselves that what we have got hold of at the present moment is indeed the same thing that we held a short time before.

Dialectics end by reconciling the mind to enormities. It becomes callous, as does the hand that has too long grasped a too hard tool. There are truths and errors to which we soon cease to be sensitive; and we often find that, with all this logical dexterity and potentiality, the judgment is not only less delicate, but less correct, than that of persons who make more use of common sense than of scientific deduction.

2. *Some principles of Logic: Identity, Certainty, and Evidence—Axioms—A-priorism—Synthesis and Analysis—Vicious Circles—Ideas and Facts—Theory and Practice—Principles and Consequences.*

Identity is the character of demonstrations in the exact sciences; thus, when I lay down that two and two are four, I say nothing else than that two and two make two and two.

The mathematical and the judicious mind are two distinct things. . . . Might we not cite some famous mathematicians, who in any other sphere than that of their favourite science—in the ordinary conduct of life—have been anything but sensible and well-judging? A geometrical intellect which is nothing more, often proves a great embarrassment in

the midst of the realities of life, and applied irrelevantly, as too often it is, it leads with strict precision and admirable method to the most palpable absurdities.

Why is it that mathematical propositions are so rigidly precise? The reason is, that they are only identical propositions, the subject and the attribute of which but express under different signs one and the same idea, or, if you will, the same value. The attribute of a mathematical proposition is not a quality, not a manner of existing which we discover in the subject, it is the subject itself offered in a new form. When I say, Two and two make four, I do not by this last word describe a property of *two plus two*, I simply give a new name to *two plus two*.

No one in mathematics speaks of an axis which has but one pole, or a line with only one end: in morals and politics this is daily done. The way in which law and duty are discussed is a striking instance of this. One is spoken of as though it did not suppose the other,—the first, more especially, as though it did imply the second.

Pride is stronger than reason; pride contradicts evidence as it would deny at need the daylight at noonday;—wonder after that at anything, and assign if you can limits to human folly.

At a certain degree of evidence silence is becoming, and a demonstration becomes almost an insult.

To insist in all matters upon evidence would be to will the degradation of our intellect.

Certainty is not *evidence*. This word, which has

been too freely used, designates a quality of the object; the word certainty expresses more particularly a condition of the subject. Evidence is in the idea or the fact; certainty is in the man who pronounces upon that fact or that idea. Certainty is merely the repose of the mind that has ceased to doubt; evidence is the character possessed by a truth when it spontaneously presents itself to any mind that does not refuse to become acquainted with it, just as the light of the sun strikes my eyes if I will only open them, and even penetrates through the veil of the closed eyelid. In this sense, which is indubitably that demanded by etymology, evidence is a rare thing, a quality which belongs but to a limited number or certain order of truths, and which the truths most important to man do not present.

Evidence relates to the general and settled organisation of the human race, and certainty depends, up to a certain point, upon the different and variable states of individuals.

Thus there are a great number of truths with respect to which we may obtain the most satisfactory certainty, which we could not deny without falsifying our conscience and our reason, and yet which lack the character of evidence. Amongst, and even at the head of these truths, stand those which form the object of our religious faiths. These truths relate to the invisible world; nothing appertaining to them strikes our senses, nothing imperiously and at once forces our conviction. We may prove them to

our own selves, we may demonstrate them to others, but they do not demonstrate, or rather do not show themselves; it is ours to make out of the arguments that establish them a closely woven chain, in the links of which our reason is bound, and as it were taken captive.

There is nothing really universal but logical axioms, and these are not true because they are universal, but universal because they are true.

In spite of appearances and established prejudice, we believe that in certain cases the *à priori* method, if very pure, very candid, and very complete, is better worth than statistics, and should precede them. There are facts which have not, and never will have statistics. It is better to prove their necessity than to prove their existence.

There are not two methods: a method excluding analysis is false, and leads to nothing. Synthesis is but a play of ideas unless preceded by analysis (Ancillon); and further, no one will allow that they employ any other. Every one claims to set out with observation, to decompose objects into their elements and to show the relations of them; every one, in short, analyses, but many analyse very ill.

In point of fact, we must not too severely condemn a vicious circle; the lives of wise men are full of such, and no one, I believe, will dare to sneer at the sight of a sceptic on his knees beseeching the Being of beings to prove to him His existence.

No one is finally modified except by facts. Argu-

ment itself has no other object than to bring our will into relation with some fact with which we had not before come into immediate contact. This method, always inferior in power to the presence of facts, shows itself more especially insufficient when we desire to convince, not thinkers by profession, but the multitude. The mass of mankind are only to be reached by close firing; in order to be intelligible to them we must appeal immediately to their passions or palpable interests, or to the primitive sentiments of human nature.

The pure and simple appearance of a fact of such a nature that the soul cannot contemplate it without being thereby modified, is stronger than all arguments. It is facts that are our masters. He who wishes to rule over us ought either to create new facts or to bring known facts within our grasp. If you can neither do the one nor the other you can pretend to no empire over our will; if you have only effete facts to bring forward you may as well be silent. This has been the problem to be solved by every religion that has aimed at laying hold of human will, and more or less all have grappled with it in proportion to the value of the facts they have produced, combined with the intensity of the belief that these have obtained.

Abstract principles, it is said, meet facts, and are broken up by this collision. Good. But you must take into consideration that this may also be said of the most inviolable precepts of Christian morality. Try to govern a state upon those principles.

That which is first in the thought of philosophers—the ideal—is not first in the order of facts. *Basis* and *principle* are not synonymous with *birth* and *beginning*. The ideal has no date, having no existence in facts, but in the mind of the philosopher to whom it presents itself as the end of things and their perfection. The ideal of any institution is not the motive by which that institution was created, nor is it present to the mind of those by whom that institution lives and endures. Even allowing that *an* ideal was their starting point, the true ideal of the thing is elsewhere, and reveals itself later. The ideal is the idea to which the institution gives rise, not that from whence the institution rose. It is the conception or expression of a law sought elsewhere, and higher than in the institution itself, and authoritatively applying itself thereto. Never was an institution born of its ideal; but all institutions gravitate and aspire towards it. The human mind makes the world in proportion as the world makes itself. But we must not hence suppose that there is nothing in common between the ideal and the real. Far from this being the case, he who should thoroughly investigate the two would end by finding in the one all the elements of the other: the same principles are the basis of both; but in the real they act without revealing themselves, in the ideal they have become self-conscious. This difference, however, is so considerable, that the same institution, taken in its real and its ideal spirit, becomes two institutions, of which the one is unintelligible to the other.

Each man may act individually according to the ideal that he has formed for himself; but in a general arrangement it is not from the ideal we must set out, but towards the ideal we must tend. We beg here to be permitted an expression, which, though inexact, will help to make us understood. One can no more do violence to the conscience of an institution than of an individual.

Philosophy has acknowledged that, in an absolute sense, the idea precedes the fact. The human mind, anterior to any experience, holds within itself a certain number of moulds or matrices, without which facts could either not penetrate it at all, or would remain without form, which comes to the same thing. On the other hand, without experience those matrices or moulds would remain eternally barren. They are the primary *ideas*, the *primary* and *fundamental* attributes of which all others are composed. These attributes or predicates only wait, so to speak, for subjects; but without them no proposition, no judgment can open out in the human mind.

Just as, in the interests of the flowers and fruits it is destined to bear, it is good that a tree should not branch out as soon as it emerges from the ground, but that for some time longer it should send up towards the sky its straight, bare stem, where the sap collects, rises, and elaborates itself for the advantage of the branches; so in all subjects it is good that the generative idea, before it brings forth after its kind, should in the first place fortify itself, and to that end

should gather itself into itself, concentrate, fathom itself. What it produces later will be all the more vigorous and strong. Anterior to all generation—by which I mean all application and detail—the idea exists in the condition of a germ; during which time it combines under the notion and the aspect of unity what will subsequently only appear as separated and differentiated: it is only complete then, only then does it contain and impart its whole secret; and by its aid attentive man may reascend, not half-way merely, but to the very summit, to the full principle of the virtue enjoined, of the vice denounced, the error pointed out, the snare discovered to him. In this secret, in the knowledge of this intimate principle, which is the philosophy of every subject, resides at least a portion of the strength of pastoral instruction. This strength, if one knows how to dispose of it, is not reserved as a privilege for the instructed or cultivated listener merely; it may be made use of for the most simple, as several of the teachings of our Lord serve to prove. I would then, generally speaking, have the preacher to fathom the parent idea of his subject before he takes up its details, and while proportioning himself to the wants and the capacity of his hearers, to make of that idea a starting point whence those hearers shall spontaneously set out, or more easily follow him through the different branches of that main line.

Every order of facts corresponds to an idea, or resolves itself finally into an idea, which is, as it

were, the rational sum of those facts: now this idea in general is so far from indifferent that it has, on the contrary, an intrinsic value that each particular fact has not. The fact is often only the manifestation or symbol of the idea; it is pre-eminently the idea that has a true value; it is the idea that we must have: doubtless this should be in order to realise it, but on the other hand it would be in man to realise it empirically if we had neither the conscience, nor the conviction, nor the tone of this idea.

The pure idea has a form and extension; but it has neither consistency, colour, nor taste.

We must not deceive ourselves as to the value of words; *synthesis*, rightly invoked as the most crying want of our age, is not beyond these same conditions. It too has its basis in facts—in well-observed facts; but it combines, reconciles them, fertilises them thus; extracts from them a living idea; is, in a word, positive, while *analysis* confines itself to playing a quite negative part. Synthesis is the instinct of humanity and the seal of genius; but however mysterious and divine its principles, it differs essentially from that immediate intuition which some authors have attributed to the earliest ages of the world, and which, growing, we are told, weaker and rarer from age to age, has at length found its deathbed in the cradle of our method.

The idea springs from facts; it had, if I may so say, to be *lived* before it could be conceived; but, once conceived, it justly claims to govern life, or

rather life rightly ranges itself under its sovereign control. Our instinct warns us that what we are is not the measure of what we ought to be; that we have to seek our rule outside of ourselves; that our will cannot be the law of our will; that it must be in the first place regulated according to the idea, to truth, which must be something other than the *Ego*. But if the idea itself have issued from the *Ego*, if it be only the expression of it, if it reproduce all its characteristics, how can it serve us as a rule? Each one aspires to order his life upon convictions; but if these convictions be only his own will disguised, in what a vicious circle is he constrained to turn!

It seems a law of our destiny with respect to theory and practice, that one must always overflow the other; that effects exceed cause, so that in some sort the effect becomes cause of its cause; that is to say, that the idea excites and even exaggerates the sentiment that gave it birth.

The word *system* is decried: but that matters little; we can only rule our life upon a system; he who has none lives by chance. A system is only a principle surrounded by its consequences; and it is equally foolish to pretend to live without a system, as without the consequences of the principle that one has accepted.

A strange distinction is drawn between principles and their application, as if the application of a true principle could be false, or as if a false principle could have true applications.

We do not allow that certain proved and even grave inconveniences convict a system of falsehood, seeing that in a corrupt world the best of systems cannot be unattended by inconveniences.

We do not allow that we can fairly charge to a principle the difficulties and hindrances that attend a return to that principle if it has been long mistaken or forgotten; or if the contrary principle, organised long ago in society, has penetrated all its parts and modified all its elements.

We do not allow that a principle should be abandoned because its rehabilitation presents difficulties, and leads us, even certainly, to foresee dangers. The greatest of all dangers (greater, I maintain, than all others put together), the most inexhaustible source of difficulties, lies in the mistaking of the principle: all that contradicts man's nature and God's law, all that is contrary to moral order, is more opposed, more prejudicial to eternal order, than any reform that brings humanity back to truth, were it through the most violent convulsions.

I have never understood that species of disdain which is now-a-days affected for theory, which is continually opposed to practice, as though it were its natural contrast. It is true that whenever those in power take possession of all realities, and are masters of the practical, theory becomes the refuge, the consolation, and the dream of the weak. Nevertheless, what is called theory is nothing else than truth itself: theory is inflexible as truth, and the proud

derision of those who do not require it to authorise their pretensions, deprives it of none of its rights or of its authority; it survives all the usurpations of violence, and all the sophisms of injustice, and in the midst of abuses, nay, of disorder itself, presents itself majestically as the indelible type of all that ought to be.

The written essay, say some, has one immense defect, that of overlooking human nature and facts: and we recall here an expression of Catherine the Great to a theorist of a different school to mine. "You work," said she, "on paper, which endures everything; and we unfortunate monarchs have to work upon human flesh." This thought has misled many. All is not flesh in man; there is even in the natural man a soul with which we have to reckon, and from which there is something to expect. We must, no doubt, take man as we find him; but we must not leave him there. This expression of Catherine's, taken in an absolute sense, is a protestation against principles, against the invisible, against the ideal,—against God. Let us take count of facts, but let facts also take count of principles.

The multitude of theories is perhaps only one proof the more of the dearth of principles.

The craving to be, or to seem, original is more easily satisfied by the creation of singular and exclusive systems than by gathering up on the highway of good sense correct and interesting ideas of detail. It is very true that good sense itself *systematises*, in-

asmuch as it connects its counsels with general ideas or with principles; but this course does not bestow the name of inventor on those who pursue it.

It is not necessary to press us hard to obtain our admission that all that is true is useful, and that the *positive* results of a theory are the natural counter-proof of its truth.

A principle is not to be moderated; it rigidly exacts all that is due to itself, and has never failed to do so.

It were as easy to make a river flow back toward its source as to prevent this principle (of the religious indifference and incompetence of the state), once consecrated by facts, from engendering all its consequences.

It should be understood that it is by no means indifferent whether we set out from a true or a false principle, and that the road from error to error is shorter than that from truth to error.

A principle may long suffer with impunity if it suffer silently; and we are hardly aware of the injury done to it till that injury becomes our own, when, the principle having become flesh of our flesh, it is no longer it that suffers, but we ourselves. But this moment comes for all truth whatever; one day it becomes a part of a living and feeling being; it becomes a personal right, a personal property, and this new character invests it with an evidence and a necessity which, in its condition of pure idea, it could have with difficulty obtained.

We start from the maxim that all that is false is bad, that all that is erroneous is dangerous. Who could controvert this? Who, even did he not manifestly see the bad results of the bad principle, could fail to presuppose, to conclude them beforehand, unless, indeed, he imagined that a bad tree could bring forth good fruits?

The consequences of a principle are irresistible only in logic; in life they are not realised without the special concurrence of the will. Principle is the raw material of actions; without it no action: but although this raw material be *organised*, though it be in itself an animated germ, yet life and action do not spontaneously flow from it, and the practice of religious morality is none the less in its totality a deliberate action.

It is a common saying that we may agree in principle and differ as to its application: this is not true with regard to immediate applications, without which the idea would eternally languish in the condition of a mere idea. Between those who admit and those who reject these, there is, whatever may appear, all the distance between one principle and another; and a discussion as to applications of this order between the former and the latter is the right, if not the only way, of coming to an understanding upon one point at least, that of having previously misunderstood each other. In the absence of this test it is but too easy to attach, without at all suspecting it, a different meaning to the same term.

Logical consequence, which undergoes eclipse in individuals, endures none in the masses. Take a multitude, and you will see that the idea that has been inculcated upon it produces all the results of which it is susceptible; and, indeed, it is only then that we can know the true bearing of ideas.

The extreme logic of an idea is its true description. We must at once carry out an idea to its extremity in order thoroughly to know it; and very often it is by stopping short on the incline, by imposing upon themselves arbitrary restrictions, by, as it were, falsifying themselves, that great errors, which, had they divulged their last consequence, would have scandalised the whole world, have, by concealing it, proved almost edifying.

3. *Problem of Cognition: Cognition, its nature and limits—Means of knowing—Reasoning, Intuition, Reason and Faith—Intellect, Will, Conscience, Morality, Sentiment, Love.*

In all the most important cases the intimate sense, when consulted, gives back in one man the same oracle as in another; but unless we go back thus far, unless we touch this sensitive point where truth does more than reside, we remain in a region of uncertainty, where everything may be contested or maintained with almost equal plausibility.

Every cognition of man must be a human cognition. He knows that only of which he is conscious,

or that which can, without effort, be directly referred to a fact of consciousness. For it is to misapply the word to pretend that beyond this limit we still know: thought may, indeed, in venturing into these spaces, go on out of sight, linking abstraction to abstraction; but it no longer *knows*, nay, it no longer thinks, since we only think upon notions. I can give no name to such operations, but they are certainly neither knowledge nor thought.

The mind of a finite creature, being unable to have any consciousness of the infinite, can have of it no knowledge that depends on consciousness. I do not mean that in one sense we have not a consciousness of the infinite. The *infinite* is synonymous with *existence*. Existence, in the fulness of the notion, is the infinite. The finite implies non-existence, and by this one fact of our having the sentiment of existence, we have that of the infinite. But we are none the less essentially finite beings, and as such, the true consciousness, the true knowledge of the infinite, is irrevocably refused to us.

To tell us that things are, because we think them; that it is our thought which causes them to be—I say *to be*—what they are, this is outside of the premises of your consciousness and of mine; this connects itself by no link to any part of consciousness, and consequently remains out of the sphere of knowledge. One may, indeed, find words in which to express such a proposition, and seem to be saying something, but,

in fact, one says nothing ; and the human mind, as it is constituted, is incapable of giving any real meaning to this combination of words. For what, after all, is the sense of a word except that which, in some way or other, makes it *sensible* to us ? In the last analysis, to know is to perceive ; to know, according to the etymology of the word, is the act by which an object unites itself to our spiritual being. We cannot absolutely separate these two elements—knowing and feeling. The error of those whose mind produces such strange theses lies not in believing themselves to have got hold of the truth, but to have got hold of an idea.

Man knows nothing in itself and absolutely, but only in its relations with other things, or in its modes, which also are relations. These relations are the true object of human knowledge ; and if we were wise, if we took our own measure, this knowledge would suffice us. But to this our pride will not consent. It aims at knowing the unconditional and the absolute, without perceiving or allowing that such a pretension involves a contradiction in terms, since knowledge is itself a relation. Knowledge must always divide the subject and the object, the knowing and the known ;—permanent and irremediable duality this ; negation of the absolute in the very search after it ! Here the mind of man hardens and irritates itself against this immense difficulty. It persists in the pursuit of a unity in which all relativity must expire. Sometimes it absorbs the

universe in itself; sometimes it, in some sort, annihilates itself not to hamper the universe; lastly, it reduces it to a thought, which thinks itself, which creates everything, even God, and of which the thought of the philosopher himself is but one *moment*: subject and object are no longer to be distinguished; to know is to be; to think is to create; all duality, all relation disappear. Man is satisfied; he has found the absolute, and this absolute he names God. And this is called knowledge! But, we repeat again, to know is, whether directly or indirectly, to get a consciousness of something or other—no knowledge without consciousness! Now here consciousness is wanting. We have words, we have a purely logical construction; we may say to ourselves that, if the reality answered to the formulæ found, we should in fact have unity, have the absolute. But is this really so? Do you know?—nay, do you even think anything? No; for this is not possible even as an attempt: it is less than an error; and when I try to discover what it resembles, I can find no other comparison than those feverish dreams in which all substances are confounded, and which no words can narrate.

In truth, not to consent to the limitations of our nature is to pretend to the Infinite, is to complain of not being God, seeing that if we stop short of the Infinite, of God, there must always be, even in the highest ranks of the creation, some attribute, some advantage to long for.

Science has never dried up any but arid natures ; in others it turns to marrow and to savour.

Universality of talent is a chimera ; but at a certain elevation in the order of thought one has the intelligence of all things—nay, this universality is the mark of great minds.

Strictly speaking, to know any one thing well, we should know everything ; and this is why, in all the truth of the term, knowledge belongs to God alone : an exclusive speciality is but a learned ignorance.

Science does not detract from simplicity : he who has seen much has felt much, and talent purifies itself through knowledge as through a fine sieve which only allows the most limpid water to pass.

In every reality, in every accomplished fact, there are two distinct things, two things that may be called concentric—the essence of the fact, and its formula. We may become acquainted with the fact through either of these : acquaintance with it through the second is *knowledge*, through the first *sight*. To know is to be acquainted with the formula, which is always more general than the fact ; to know, therefore, is to class. To see is to penetrate through the formal envelope into the certainty of the fact, and, consequently, into its individuality ; it is not to class, but to name. One of these acts belongs to the intellect, the other exclusively belongs to the soul. The intellect knows only abstractions and forms, the soul sees beings and substances ; the

intellect knows only genera and species, the soul discovers individualities; the intellect knows, the soul sees.

One thing is certain, that if ancient science were not a seer, she claimed to be one, and that from the very substance of thought she attempted to compose a world. Modern science has substituted for the wings of Icarus a pair of crutches, bearing the names of *observation* and *induction*, with which, no doubt, she advances more securely. Nevertheless, science would do wrong to attribute all its progress to method. Behind the two instruments that we have named resides a free force, a spontaneous element of the human mind, which we can name, but not define, and which impels to observation and induction without being itself impelled. Observation is not the starting point of the mind; it is the first term of an action, which has a higher origin. This fact leaves the bases of experimental philosophy untouched; it has nothing to fear from it—scarcely, indeed, needs to take notice of it. Whatever the nature and true name of that occult power of which we speak, the foundation of the new, as the only philosophy, stands firm as Bacon laid it down, and Pope summed it up in the forcible and simple line,—

“What can we reason, but from what we know?”

Reasoning leaves truth external to us. To become a part of our lives, a part of ourselves, it needs to be quickened by faith. If the soul does not concur

with the mind, the most legitimate conviction will lack firmness and vivacity. There is a courage of the mind as well as a courage of the soul, and to believe thoroughly in an absent truth implies a force that all have not got. Do what we will, the conclusions at which we have arrived, by a series of logical deductions, will hardly produce upon the mind the impression of reality. There will always be a great difference between arguing and seeing, concluding and experiencing. It appears as though, after all, the spirit needs to see; as though there were no other energetic and efficacious conviction than what depends upon sensible impressions: and here is the value of faith—it is a species of sight.

This force, which supplies the place of evidence; which, as soon as man, adventuring himself into the sea of thought, begins to lose his footing and feels himself overmastered by the waves, takes hold of him, raises, sustains, and enables him to swim through the foam of doubt to the pure and tranquil shore of certainty—this force is *faith*.

Reason appears to us the form or special function of the mind; faith, a force of the soul, a fact rather moral than intellectual. For if it be intellectual, why not call it *reason*? The idea that we entertain of faith may be summed up thus:—You have reason to believe, and therefore you do believe. This reason may, just as well as any chain of reasoning, be the convincing evidence. Be that as it may, you believe. Well, then, the attachment of your soul, its sur-

render to, its reliance upon, the fact that you hold to be true—this is *faith*. Faith, reliance, fidelity are but one!

It is customary to oppose reason to faith; rather should we say that one completes the other, and that they are two pillars, neither of which could stand without the other. Man is pitied because he cannot know, or rather cannot see anything, and yet is compelled to believe; but this is to pity him for one of his privileges. Direct knowledge does not put into requisition the living energies of the soul; it is a passive state unhonoured by any spontaneity; but in the act of faith (for it is an act, and not a state) the soul is in some sort creative; or, at least, if it do not create truth, it brings it near, appropriates it, realises it; an idea becomes a fact, and a fact incessantly present. Thought, leaning upon a force of the soul, manifests all its dignity in unfolding its true independence; man multiplies his life, extends his universe, and attains to the perfect stature of the thinking being. His dignity springs not from knowing, but from believing.

Faith finds scope for itself even in facts of personal experience. Such is our mind—at least, such has it become—that it distinguishes between external and internal experience, and that deferring unhesitatingly to the evidence of the senses, it costs it an effort to surrender to the evidence of the conscience. It needs submission, and consequently a kind of faith, to admit those primary truths that man carries

within his own breast, which have no antecedents, bring forward no guarantees except their own consciousness, which do not prove, but feel themselves. Irresistible in their nature, it nevertheless requires an effort on the part of some of us to believe in them.

Faith is not credulity; the most credulous man is not always the one who believes best: a creed is lost all the more easily the more readily it has been adopted, and the firmest convictions are very often those which have cost most. Credulity is but the servile complaisance of a weak mind, while faith demands all that the mind has of vigour and energy. Faith is not the compulsory and passive adhesion of a mind conquered by proofs; it is a force of the soul, as inexplicable in its principle as any of those native qualities which distinguish one man from his fellows—a force which does not content itself with accepting the truth, but which is possessed with it, embraces it, identifies itself with it, and lets itself be borne on thereby to all the consequences that it points out and enjoins.

A vast gap stretches out in general between knowledge and action: over this gulph a bridge is thrown by faith, which, resting upon a given fact, a primary notion, springs across the void and bears us to the other side. Any experience whatever, physical or moral, an external or internal view, whether of observation or intuition, is the starting point, the reason of faith; for we never believe without some

reason for doing so. This first fact neither exacts nor constitutes faith; but its consequences, its logical development, only takes shape, only become a reality for man, by means of faith, which renders them present to him, and constructs for him a world beyond that revealed by personal experience.

What is the meaning of comprehension? It means, to grasp the logical chain, the chain of ideas that links together two or more facts; it is to convince or assure ourselves by other means than experience; it is to place ourselves mentally in mediate relation with objects, immediate contact with which we cannot have. The comprehension of the mind, then, is, properly understood, only a supplement to the inevitable lacunes of experience. These lacunes of experience depend either upon the absence of objects or upon their nature, which has no point of contact with ours. If neither of these two obstacles existed, man would no longer have anything to comprehend, for he would touch, test, taste all things. Reason in him would be replaced by intuition. Wherever there is scope for intuition there is no longer comprehension, because there is something better; or, if you will have it to be comprehension still, it is a comprehension of a new nature and higher order, which explains everything to itself without difficulty, to which everything is clear, but which cannot communicate itself by words to the reason of another. Now such is the comprehension of the heart.

There are truths of intuition which reside in the

soul, and cannot be grasped by the soul immediately. In order to conceive and embrace them, reflection is absolutely useless. All it can do regarding them is to obscure and efface them. And it succeeds in doing this, either by applying itself immediately to these truths and seeking to analyse that to which analysis is as repugnant as death to the living being, or by unwisely filling our mind with a thousand other thoughts which have not originated in any first truth of the soul: either way it ends by absorbing the moral in the intellectual man. Now the intellect, by this indiscreet avidity, deprives itself of its greatest treasure. It had no more precious property than these very truths, the tradition of which it has lost little by little. With the notions of the soul it loses the material of its best inspirations. "Great thoughts come from the heart," not the mind. To the soul alone, therefore, belong the thoughts that reunite, to the mind those that divide.

Complication has penetrated everywhere. Few people have an immediate insight into moral truth such as nature has revealed it. Almost all men, even the least cultivated, only see invisible things through phrases. Intuition is very rare, ready-made phrases are common and cheap. It is with these that three-quarters of the world think on moral subjects. Systems come somewhat dearer; they are not to be made at pleasure; but the rudest mind may employ phrases, and believe itself to *say* what it *repeats*, and to have *seen* what it *says*. Each repeats his phrase as the

pure and authentic result of his internal experience. What do I say? Is not the age itself a great simpleton, that has had its phrase supplied to it, and goes on repeating it emphatically, and believing itself not only to be expressing an idea, but, moreover, *its own* idea? We live on phrases, we live outside of ourselves; the soul grows hollow, and there is no longer any sap or circulation save in the outer rind that once covered and now represents the whole.

A hollow, abstract mode of thinking accompanies many people even through the most terrible hours. Trouble, anguish itself, cannot separate them from that artificial life; even then they only feel what people have agreed to feel, and only say what is conventional.

The mere phrase obstinately holds its ground on lips trembling with passion, or pale with approaching death. Nothing has any longer power to throw us out of our artificial, assumed existence, to our proper and real one.

The careful observation of facts implies, I will not say a beginning of faith, but a preliminary acquiescence in the possibility of the facts that we have got to examine. There are facts that we deny beforehand, because they contradict our principles: it remains to be known whether these principles themselves, founded, perhaps, upon too small a number of observations, may not themselves need to be reformed. . . .

The *à priori* argument implies the use of the

à posteriori, facts having been required to form it; and if the *pure à priori* exist, it can only be in those general and primary sentiments which are the basis and condition of human nature.

The reason that refuses the restraints of conscience, and the conscience which will not listen to the counsels of reason, are equally unworthy of their name.

But these two forms are distinct, and conscience is no more a product of reason than reason is a part of conscience.

What are the relations between the intellect and the conscience?

The first is the instrument of the second; but for the rest there is no essential relation between these two forces.

All the syllogisms in the world, all the efforts of the most vast intellectual powers, could never originate in the soul the least sentiment of justice and injustice, the least notion of duty. The intellect may fertilise this germ—indeed, this fertilisation cannot take place without the intellect; but the germ pre-exists.

Again, it is not a necessary effect of intelligence to develop and perfect the moral sense. To hold that it is, we should have to forget that numbers of the most wicked men that have desolated the world were men of genius.

Intellect comes to the help of morality *if this be willed*, but this restriction says all.

There are intellects that logic renders ferocious; one of these is no longer a soul, but a dialectical apparatus. Thought, too, may brutalise if separated from feeling, conscience, and evidence. This is the impression we sometimes feel from the contemplation of those mighty logicians whom we admire with terror. Let us believe neither in the senses nor the intellect, but in the soul.

It is not by the intellect alone, nor by the intellect first of all, that we can judge of things pertaining to the moral order. That we may know these we are provided with a special sense—the moral. The intellect may subsequently intervene as an auxiliary—it observes, classes, compares our impressions, but does not produce them; and it would be as unreasonable to attribute them to it, as to pretend that we obtain the knowledge of colours by the ear, of perfumes by the eye, of sounds and of harmony by our sense of smell. The things of the heart are only truly understood by the heart.

No passion whatever could exert any influence upon a notion of the mind did it not in the first place undermine the feeling upon which the notion reposes. This feeling once sapped, the notion totters and crumbles away. There can be no conflicts but between things similar, between one feeling and another, between egotism and affection. Corroded by its dangerous neighbour, affection grows weak and poor, and thus, as we have said, the type that the Lord had engraved in the ground of our conscience effaces

itself little by little, and the rule of our moral judgment gets confused and distorted.

There is a strict relation between the rectitude of the moral sense and the correctness of the mind. The first sometimes seems to give the second,—the good heart produces the sound sense; nay, might we not even say that it is one of its elements? On many subjects this rectitude preserves from prescribed admirations and ready-made opinions, and makes many deceitful illusions vanish away. It is true that a purely conventional idea cannot last: it perishes by the mere effect of time, apparently; but in fact, by the slow and continuous action of error upon itself. For the death of error is a sort of suicide: by placing itself in opposition to facts it exposes itself to be unpleasantly struck at and undermined by these facts, as the rock by the waves; and at the end of a century nothing remains of such or such an opinion, without our being able to say why, exactly, or how it was destroyed. It would be sad, however, if this were always the case; if error always died of itself and was never slain; if there were not found in some mind or some conscience weapons for its destruction; if there were not, in a word, in our nature a sufficient power of truth for this glorious immolation. Happily a healthy intellect, an upright heart, anticipates the action of time, and proves that there are not only *realities* but *truths*. Our modern men of talent appear too much inclined to leave it to time to set things to rights, whether for or against them. Time,

indeed, is doubtless nothing; correctly speaking, there are but men and things, existences and actions seen from the point of view of duration; time is nothing and does nothing; it is only the medium of all that is and all that acts. And more, there is always, together with what we have called the suicide of error, some individual thought which helps it to die, so that this death is the act of everything and everybody; but to trust to this without choosing personally to concur in it, is to remit, in an unmanly way, the interests of truth into the hands of time; and if you look closely, you will see that our expressions are still too flattering, and that this abdication of thought and conscience in favour of that vague thing called *time*, implies a profound indifference to truth, if not the actual negation of it.

Does intellectual enthusiasm always carry with it moral enthusiasm; does it necessarily lead to it; has it any natural affinity with that admirable sentiment? Or again, does this love of abstraction, this passion of thought, raise a barrier between our souls and selfishness—at all events, selfishness of the least gross character?

It would often be the height of injustice to deny that the position of the speculator is more exalted than that of the practical materialist; that the atmosphere he breathes is purer, and that a nation of thinkers, could we conceive of such, would not present so distressing an aspect, or bequeath to history

such blood-stained memories as another nation more keenly and exclusively taken up with what we call the realities of life. But do not let us go further, or confound what is profoundly distinct.

Between speculative truth and moral life there is not the continuity often supposed: the latter is not the prolongation of the former; the two would remain eternally separated without the introduction of the moral sense, and the moral sense itself needs to be restored.

It is permissible, nay, it is useful, in the labours of thought occasionally to view our subject stripped of its moral interests: to make abstraction of material interests is to simplify the question without perverting it; it is in a certain way to purify it. But to lose all interest in the good, in our pursuit of the true, is, in fact, to renounce the discovery of the true, since what is good is inseparable from truth. The true without the good is not true; the good is the primary truth, the true *par excellence*, the truth of the true. All other sacrifices enrich us by that they take away—make us, as it were, live more; this sacrifice—by which I mean that mood which affects not to see in the good an interest, and the supremest of all interest—this is a suicide.

The most false of all minds are those that apply mathematics in the region of feeling.

The utility of the study of the exact sciences is positive; they teach as precision a means that leads us to truth: to find the right name and exact value

of all things may contribute to morality. Mathematics are gymnastics of the mind.

Man is only what he ought to be in respect to his fellow-man in so far as he is so in respect to his Creator. But the wisdom of God is manifold in its operations. Alternately it brings humanity back to good sense by morality, and back to conscience by the activity of the mind.

Philosophy is implicitly morality, and every system of the universe is a system of life.

Is it philosophy that produces morality, or morality that determines philosophy? Without at first answering this question directly, let us remember how rare it is that intellectual speculations are completely exempt from moral influence; how psychological researches, more particularly, must needs be exposed to these; how perfectly recognised is the bearing of will upon opinion; lastly, how seldom it is that thought only springs from itself, only consults itself, and imperturbably traces out its own road through the suggestions and seductions of the moral being continually by its side. Those who will reflect upon the continual attempts at usurpation made by the will upon thought will not be disposed to reject as absurd the supposition of a philosophy generated, or, at least, if we might venture to say it, *conditioned* by morality. Those, again, who ask themselves which is strongest in man, feeling or thought; which most imperiously determines his conduct, desire or conviction; which it is that most irresistibly dominates his life; in other

words, that most makes him to be what he is, thought or feeling; those who remark in addition that all social theories, all institutions, have begun not by being speculations but affections or wants, will not be far from giving the preference to the supposition that subordinates philosophy to morality. I believe that it is far more easy to admit that a certain tendency of the will leads to a certain theory regarding the soul, the world, and life, than to admit that such a theory, deduced from the pure speculations of the intellect, has imprinted a certain direction on the will.

If it be objected that morality itself is derived from certain speculative principles, and is at its basis philosophy, I reply, What are these very principles but moral facts, internal facts; in other words, sentiments discovered at the bottom of the soul—the primary material, the substance of all ulterior speculation? Would any one pretend that this coincidence, or this relation between philosophy and morality, is a fortuitous encounter, to which each doctrine has developed itself independently,—a sort of pre-established harmony? Certainly not. We must then admit an action of one of those disciplines on the other; and this granted, it seems to me difficult to hesitate in our choice.

The intellect of each may flourish while his individuality withers and dies. Neither thought, with all its soaring, nor the passions in all their excess, develop or manifest it. With all these one may have no character of one's own. The soul only

receives its proper name, its true personality, from the conscience,—that too much neglected confidant, that too much ignored authority, to which we must always listen if we would not yield up our *me* to foreign and fortuitous influence, if we would live our own life, and be our own selves. By the life of pure intellect, in the movements of natural affection, we have nothing that intrinsically distinguishes us from our fellows: these two facts do not as yet manifest our personality in the true sense of the word; faculties and instincts are not us; we must descend deeper to find ourselves.

St. Paul has advanced nothing paradoxical, he has but indicated a truth of advanced psychology, in saying, “Thus, then, it is not I that do it (do that I would not), but sin that dwelleth in me” (Romans vii. 17). Thus even in sin the *ego* is distinct from sin. And what is this *ego* distinct from sin, which judges and condemns it, but the conscience? In the same way, in man in general the *ego* is distinct from the intellect and the natural inclination. So long as we live only in these two positions of our nature, we have but a superficial and eccentric existence, and the actions that we consummate by their agency are less actions than human phenomena, of which our person is the sphere. Without a moral excitation the intellect only acts externally. It modifies our destiny, not ourselves; it characterises us outwardly, not inwardly; it renews the form, not the substance of our life.

There are men of high intellect whose personality has outlines not more distinct than those of a cloud ; men who only receive their form from circumstances, just as water only takes its form from the shape of the vessel that contains it. A people composed of such beings could not be compared to a library, but rather to a collection of copies of one work differently bound. In a land where convictions are rare and conscience is not exercised, the passions alone diversify the aspect by their different degrees of energy : the stir they occasion, the sudden changes they bring about, create *individuality of situation* ; but true individuality is hardly seen except in the chiefs of this general movement, and not always seen in them.

And let me add that when the absence of an inner life has effaced individuality, the labours of the intellect may, far from reviving, tend completely to extinguish it.

They do this by diverting more and more from spontaneous intuition, and rendering it even more superfluous. They lead us to assist at all things, even our own life, as though it were a spectacle. They draw our convictions from without instead of receiving them from within. They take us out of our nature, our country, and drag us far away from the world of immediate impressions into the world of ideas. The inner life becomes an idea, a sphere of ideas. One observes one's life to such a degree that one forgets to live it ; by dint of contemplating one ceases to see oneself. Internal inspi-

rations, the oracles of the soul, no longer make themselves heard: one has scarcely any instincts left: the first groundwork, the basis of moral ideas, their starting point, is lost; we are no longer men, we are all thought.

It is as unwise to substitute ideas for feelings as words for ideas.

The reasons to be given in favour of defective truth belong to the depths of the soul far more than to the province of the intellect.

If you examine the matter closely you will see that, contrary to the most accredited opinion, it is feeling in man (*want*, if you will,—that first feeling, the most obstinate of all), that is really the primary fact, the generator of others; the source of the modification of the being, and especially of the ideas. There lies the hidden germ of that personality that blossoms out afterwards in the intellect, and forms so many varied and fruitful systems. The source remains concealed; tributaries bring in fresh water, but the stream directs itself according to the first impulse communicated by the will. It is thus that philosophical systems, those fruits of the travail of the human intellect, have been originally determined, or at least conditioned, by the moral state of the peoples among whom they have prevailed.

This involuntary preference that we give to intellect over morality, and to the gifts of the mind rather than those of the heart, is one of the characteristics and diseases of our times.

By dint of working on our thoughts, contemplating, living in them, we come to substitute them for our feelings. For many of us, mere notions have taken the place of affections, the mind that of the soul; almost the whole of morality has passed into intellect; and the blood, forgetting its office of making the heart beat, flows to the brain, organises there an imitation of the heart, and constitutes *it* the centre of circulation. Will men not understand that the gradual substitution of the intellect for the functions of the soul, ends by making those in whom it takes place, involuntary comedians, dupes of their own drama?

People do not reflect that the cognitions which depend upon a certain state of the soul alter with that very state, and that a conscience lulled to sleep lets all sorts of errors creep into the mind. They do not see that our soul is no longer a mirror in which truth at once reflects itself without our will having anything to do with it, but an opaque surface on which truth must be incessantly engraved anew; that, since the fall, faith is so little independent of the will, that the will, on the contrary, is an element and condition of it; that truth has no longer an irresistible evidence, nor, consequently, the property of making the same impression on all minds alike, and subjugating them all at one blow.

Independence is only one of the conditions of good judgment. Truth—and when we have to deal with the actions of man, moral truth—constitutes its real worth. We want the whole truth with regard

to man and to principles ; we demand, that while right as to the value of facts, the judge should not be less so in his estimate of the value of the laws he applies. He is not sufficiently so if he be indifferent, for indifference on such a point is the gravest of all errors.

How alarming that expression of Pascal's, "The will, organ of belief!" But how true also ! That which in the sphere of human opinion is called faith, what is it but will applied to objects of speculation ? Has not the intensity of this faith for its exact measure the force of the will ?

The sciences find their object outside of us, whether in physical nature, which excites in us neither sympathy nor antipathy, and leaves us in full possession of our indifference, or in the world of moral beings, which, without offering this advantage in the same degree, at least only touches us indirectly and occasionally. The will is kept apart, or at all events scientific objects do not forcibly attract it within their circle. Facts present themselves to our mind in their objective purity, not surrounded beforehand by the mists of our passions. Errors are indeed possible ; but there is one cause of error the less ; it is certain that error is less near, less imminent. We have a fixed point, a firm platform afforded to our intellectual operations. The degree of certitude of our cognitions is so much the greater as their object, in a sense, is further removed, more foreign to us ; and the chief weight of the evidence lies in

the sphere of purely rational facts; I mean those of which the very material is furnished by reason. Is it the same with the ideas of philosophy; I mean of positive philosophy, of *constructive* philosophy? Where shall we look for their starting point except in the *ego*? and what is the pure *ego*, the abstract *ego*? In geometry we admit the line without breadth, but can we admit the *ego* without qualities, without life? Does such an *ego* exist save in the head of those philosophers who have dreamed it, and can any deductions or conclusions drawn from it be more than hypothetically true; or anything built on such a basis be better than a castle in the air, a space in space, a sea in the ocean? Or, if we grant to the philosophic *ego* what we have just denied it, have we a basis that is firm, immutable, and identical with itself? Must not this concrete *ego* bring with it a part of what life has endowed it with,—interests, passions, hatred, which we must needs reckon among passions; prejudice, which is a habit; in a word, a whole moral condition likely to detract from the impartiality of its research and the authenticity of its results? And who is there that can doubt that this is the *ego* that has been present and active at the outset of philosophical research, so that each research of this order necessarily begins by begging the question; each makes its aim at starting; each in setting out knows where it shall arrive; there never can be in the philosophical world any real voyage of discovery; the most sincere have had a prepossession: and this,

at least, cannot be contested ; in every one affections and moral life are anterior to a formal philosophy, and these affections, this life, are the *ego* in all its energy ; hence this *ego* will not, be sure, adopt a system of philosophy according to which he would *distinctly* see his affections denied and his moral being contradicted : between the system and the *ego* evidence is ready to interfere ; the philosophical creed lets itself be determined by the life ; is it conversely so with the life ? J. J. Rousseau has somewhere said, “ Our feelings depend upon our ideas.” This is true *in its turn*, as we shall see ; but feelings would not obey quite abstract, and in some sort, artificial ideas, if an internal sentiment had not previously commanded that obedience. Besides, what is proved to us by this philosophy, that constantly recommences and never ends, that settles nowhere, that varies with characters and institutions, except that instead of being a creation of the intellect acting with sovereign spontaneity upon the elements furnished it by neutral materials, it is nought else than the varied succession of the soul’s evolutions, fatiguing itself by dint of diversified attitudes ?—in other words, that the moral condition is the *reality* whose energetic action gives rise, in the night of metaphysical darkness, to a dream that calls itself philosophy ; a dream, I allow, full of significance and importance, and one of the most solemn phenomena presented by human life ?

Shall we be told that this is to deny philosophy ?

Yes, if it be to deny it, to recognise that the starting point of all metaphysical or ontological theories is buried in impenetrable darkness ; that in that darkness, in place of the mystery it hides, we must necessarily plant our *ego*, and that all philosophy is subjective, taking that word in its widest signification. If we deny philosophy, eclecticism, while piquing itself on being a philosophy, has denied it before us : it is to this negative value that the partisans of the different systems in vogue in Germany really reduce it ; and, in fact, according to the report of its most able professors, what is it but the summary of the popular, or rather human beliefs that lie at the basis of all systems ; the statistics of those truths of intuition or feeling that humanity has in all times held to be constant ; and, finally, the general history of the human mind, and not one of its creations ?

We must not be deceived by the force and strictness of dialectics displayed in the exposition of some of these philosophical systems. Dialectics are not reasons ; they are to reason what the bow is to the lyre. They are not more at the command of truth than of error, or even of folly.

Any given object can only be treated scientifically when the acknowledged end of research is not directly marked out by the will ; in other words, when an inner impulse does not impel us toward one conclusion rather than another. Even in studies that have no essential connection with human interests and passions, this purely scientific character is

difficult to attain; in religious and moral science it is constantly compromised, and very seldom preserves itself intact.

The heart does not think, but in many cases it determines the point of view from whence we think. A lofty sentiment is like a high mountain, from which we embrace a wider horizon. And how many great thoughts are but great sentiments of which the mind takes account! How many talents have been enlarged by feeling! how many minds aroused by a lively affection!

There are animals provided by nature with formidable pincers, which, when they have been used to seize any object, they have no power to relax again; they vainly endeavour to do this, but the more they try to let go their hold the more they squeeze, pierce, and transpierce. Is this strength? By no means; it is weakness. Such is will apart from truth—will as merely will. We might call it a force, but this were a pure illusion of our senses, and the effects deceive us as to the cause. If you insist, however that it is a force, it must be added that it is a brutal force.

There is an abyss between the faculty of judging and that of willing—between the intellect and the will. When the two are united this is not through any essential affinity, not by their own act and deed, it is by an intermediary, an intercessor, so to speak, which recommends the cause of the intellect to the heart. The conviction of the mind does not lead to

a corresponding determination of the will. If we yield obedience to a chain of reasoning, this is only because we find in our hearts the impulse to obey our own conviction, or because argument has brought out facts calculated to influence our will. More than this, it is not always possible that our reasoning should be understood, far less acted upon. In matters of morality it very often happens that the clearest deductions are not understood, because they do not correspond to any feeling of the heart. In such a case the most reasonable counsels are thrown away. How, indeed, should you be understood when you appeal to a notion that does not exist in the one you are addressing ?

Man is only to be determined ultimately by his affections. To overcome one passion another must be called up ; one affection can only be destroyed by another affection. But affections can only be excited by facts—by facts, that is, which cause the vibration of one of the two chords of every human soul, selfishness or love.

Do not let us expect love of truth from a soul to which all other loves are foreign ; let us accept our nature with all its needs and all its wealth. Let us believe that a high degree of candour is compatible with keen affections and heart convictions, and even presupposes them. A man of science and probity, the illustrious Schleiermacher, has declared that “*exegesis, treated without a true theological and Christian interest, is as useless as*

it would be without the knowledge and spirit of philology."

Apart from some natural affections inherent in our blood, apart more especially from those of the senses and personality, which of our feelings is there that is thoroughly our own, that is thoroughly ourselves? I know a man who, by dint of occupying himself artistically with combinations of ideas and combinations of words, has reached the point of rarely being sure of the sentiment he feels: he asks himself whether it is anything more than a tune that gets performed within him, as it were, by touching the spring of a musical box; he groans no longer to find certain stars in his sky; he congratulates himself whenever he unexpectedly feels his heart moved by a really authentic exertion of pity, sympathy, or indignation; and he rejoices in one of these discoveries like the woman in the Gospel over her recovered piece of money.

Whatever takes possession of the soul takes possession of the mind as well. Every sentiment has its corresponding idea. Accordingly, it is a generally recognised fact, that every interest that stirs our nature deeply creates, or rather awakens, intellectual powers of which we were not previously conscious. Helvetius did not set out from a false principle in proposing to cultivate the mind by the passions. It is certain that so long as a man has not worked under the sway of an affection,

we do not yet know of what his intellect may be capable.

The habit of yielding to our sensual tastes, the exclusive pursuit of material enjoyments, enervates and brutalises us; it, too, is an abstraction, and the most fatal of all: but may we not also be permitted to say, that the abstraction which silences the prepossessions of the soul in favour of those of the mind, enervates too, in its way, and in a sense brutalises us? Man all matter is contemptible, man all mind appalling.

When liberty pretends to be more than a means, all is lost in politics; when art becomes its own end, all is lost in literature; and so it is too in morality, when thought refuses to recognise moral life either for its starting point or goal. The doctrine of the idea merely for the sake of the idea is more false, if possible, than that of art for the sake of art.

We must be preoccupied. The force of an individual and a people lies not in the absence, but in the existence of a preoccupation.

Individual or people, we are great only thus. "Or in great thoughts," will you say? Yes; but remember that "great thoughts come from the heart." Besides, it remains to be proved that abstraction purifies the soul in proportion as it produces a perfect vacuum around the mind; it remains to be proved that these speculators, so free from any prepossession in favour of moral interests, are free from

it with regard to all besides, and that there remains within them no place for low passions.

I cannot allow *Voraussetzungslosigkeit*, or, if you will, excessive objectivity, to be a fundamental and indelible character of Germany. But it has been virtually carried away in that direction; and this tendency does it injury. I know no more significant display of this than the excessive admiration that Goethe has excited, precisely in this character of an indifferential or objective genius, and the eagerness with which at one time Schiller was overthrown at the feet of this idol. I cannot endure that one who has loved and hated nothing should be himself so much loved, and that the impress of genius should be recognised in scepticism and impassibility. There is a contradiction worse than strange in this enthusiasm, excited by the very absence of enthusiasm. Aristotle used to wonder that any one could speak of loving Jupiter, and I in my turn marvel that this Jupiter of thought and art can be beloved.

In order that science should have all its purely scientific character, Germany has too much separated it from life; has too severely isolated the "savant" from the man; too much excluded the heart, the conscience, the interests, from scientific toil. In refusing their concurrence the intellect has deprived itself of its most legitimate and indispensable aid; it has laid aside, as it were, voluntarily, some of the elements most essential to the solution of its problems. Never will science be cultivated with the

same exclusiveness in France : the national character is invincibly opposed to it ; it is rather the contrary excess that may be apprehended. The French savant does not abstract himself to such a degree from humanity, life, and his own self. The most learned among learned men remain men nevertheless—more so, perhaps, than they wish. This stoicism of German science, this fabulous and sometimes extravagant impartiality of speculation, is not within our reach, and in this respect we are more in the condition for truth than the Germans in matters where life has its own premises to supply. It is life rather than thought which renders us unbelieving ; thought only comes in subordinately, and never alone ; elsewhere the inverse holds good. And if, on some future day, realities, experience, urge us towards the Gospel, it is not speculation that will hold us back.

The more disinterested science has been, the more it has served humanity. Seek truth for truth's own sake, and all other things will be added to you.

Reason in each of us is more or less laden on some one point or other with a sort of concretion that the passions have collected there ; beneath that concretion the instrument of truth is found unimpaired, but before it is freed from the foreign substance that surrounds it, no certain use can be made of it. In point of belief, a measure of uniformity only prevails regarding truths to which every one can adapt himself ; it is not so with other truths ; there passions,

vices, cause everything to be believed or denied, as the case may be, and both the one and the other with a sort of sincerity.

The philosophy of no age whatsoever springs only from philosophy ; systems spring from morals, and the direction taken by the intellect is explained by the state of society. Speculative scepticism would be less alarming were it not preceded and produced by moral scepticism ; sentiment receives to a certain point the influence of ideas, but these are subjected to the far more direct and energetic influence of sentiments ; the moral man imperiously determines the intellectual, the intellectual man has far less hold over the moral ; thus when the question is to reconstitute moral doctrines, although, indeed, the good offices of a healthy philosophy should be gratefully accepted, yet the success to be expected from it would be very inadequate were not some power more living, more closely connected with the human wants, to interpose to raise and reconstruct the ruined edifice of moral beliefs.

The intellect, having only to deal with *ideas*, things abstract and insensible, has no call to exercise charity. Charity thus applied would be suicidal. The intellect which lives upon *truth* cannot refuse itself this nourishment without dying ; and who, I pray you, would be profited by its death ? It is the *man* who is bound to be charitable ; it is he who, in attacking error, should spare the erring.

Passion is better qualified than argument to solve great questions

Do what we will, we can never entirely escape from our nature, and never have purely and simply the philosophy of our thought, but more or less that of our character—and always we have a character; the absence of any prepossession whatsoever would still be a character, and perhaps the worst of all.

Modern idolatry has raised two altars, towards which a crowd of worshippers keep pressing on; one of these altars is that of matter, the other that of the intellect. On both of these human victims are offered up; for all idolatrous rites are murderous. The adoration of mind has its barbarities as well as that of matter; the man of intellect finds his profit in sparing nothing. He who shows most contempt passes for the most sagacious. It has been truly said that the heart is often intellectual, but that the intellect has no heart. In the unbridled indulgence of the mind, as well as in the unbridled indulgence of the senses, the heart withers up, man becomes cruel; nay, we must speak out, he even becomes stupid! There are so many things of which we can only judge by the heart, that, if the heart be wanting, reason must necessarily talk nonsense. In order to know the extent of intelligence conferred by the heart, and to what degree the culture of the mind may degrade the intelligence, just place a case of conscience before the man of mere talent and the man of piety. "Thy word, O Lord, giveth wisdom to the simple. I looked thereon, and was

enlightened." And this is why, in our days, the intoxication of intellectual triumphs alarms me almost as much as the general tendency to material self-indulgence.

Reasoning is only powerful in life through the life itself; it less determines than is determined; long discussions may fail to arrive at any conclusion. The last word belongs to a less abstract authority. It is little on certain subjects to have *reason* on our side; if we have not the reason of the time and circumstances, the logic of ideas, and the logic of facts, equally haughty, equally imperious, run in parallel lines, scorning each other; and in moral matters, the moral condition decides everything.

The mind that reasons and concludes is nothing without the soul that divines; the revelations of the latter are the premises on which reason operates. How can one understand the citizen without being oneself a citizen? the believer, if one believes nothing? the man, in a word, if one is not oneself a man?

The history of men is the history of human souls; and the soul alone can comprehend the soul. We cannot, therefore, conceive of the historian as of an impassive intellect; the historian must be completely man. Nay, we should be even mistaken in believing that the abstract love of the truth might stand him in stead of all other human sentiments. The love of the truth cannot exist in man to the exclusion, or in the absence, of other human sen-

timents. He who has this passion has, necessarily, others. Human morality is not the fortuitous combination of independent elements ; all virtues depend upon one principle, and are at their root but one and the same virtue. But more than this, the love of truth is, of all these elements, the one which can be least conceived of as isolated. It implies the pre-existence of many others. It is, as it were, the last result, the purest emanation, the most exquisite perfume, of a soul which has not made an arbitrary selection of certain virtues, but embraced them all with equal reverence, if not with equal love—of a soul which loves *virtue*. The love of truth is, in principle, nothing else than love of virtue, just as the love of virtue is only the love of practical truth. We must, therefore, infer by the side, or rather at the base, of the love of the truth, other affections ; pure ones, no doubt, but in every case human.

Love is, perhaps, the most fertile principle of knowledge ; that previous knowledge which it implies is, probably, very slight in comparison with what it produces. It has, I allow, its excesses, its illusions, its dangers ; but it contributes to, far more than it detracts from, the truth of history.

III.—MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS.

Experience is not only a fact, it is an action. It consists of the facts of our life illumined by reflection, or, if you prefer it, of reflection combining with

these facts, to give them their meaning, and link them with their consequences. It is only when we have reflected much that we have experienced much.

Pedantry is but a grave frivolity.

It is from those who do not know how to take account of themselves that we must ask an account of the nature of all. It is those who can hardly speak that we have to interrogate—the less they have *learnt*, the more they *know*; and their very darkness will be to you a light.

The individual may abstract himself, may sever himself in twain; half of his being may ignore the other half: every given age is essentially and invariably concrete. The human race is the true man, the complete, the typical man. Psychology has no more certain basis than the study of the human species in mass, as considered from age to age. Such as are its manners, such its morality; such, too, its philosophy!

The distinction drawn by Duclos—"There is a great difference between the knowledge of the man and the knowledge of men," is followed by these words: "To know man it suffices to study oneself; to know men, we must have practical experience of others." I admit neither of these propositions. I believe that, at bottom, these two knowledges are by no means so distinct; the one is necessary to the other, completes the other; and I cannot better support my opinion than by quoting that maxim of Vauvenargues—"We discover in ourselves what

others conceal from us, and we recognise in others what we conceal from ourselves."

Man is at bottom a serious being; whoever speaks to him seriously is most likely to be listened to. This remark applies especially to the working classes, in which we can most easily distinguish the primitive characters of humanity. The populace are apt, if you laugh with them, to believe that you are laughing at them. The masses are serious.

There are people who, in a new mood of mind, perfectly forget what they said, and even what they did, before they fell into it: the idea that they have no longer, they believe themselves never to have had.

It is all one whether we bury our soul beneath the vine-tree or a clod of earth, beneath a learned folio or a banker's book.

The soul may fall asleep in the tumult of business, just as one is made drowsy by the *tic-tac* of a mill.

In studying the phenomena of internal existence, we are almost tempted to admit in man two concentric souls, the outer of which is but the counter proof or reflection of the other—a superficial soul, which remains a stranger to obligation, obedience, and will, but which can conceive of them all; which receives the confidences of the true soul, holds the clue to it, speaks its language, and, owing to this intimate understanding, gives itself out and takes itself for a soul, although it is only the light caused by the soul on the intellect. Whatever be the nature of this faculty and the secret of its relations

with life, we do not see in it the seat of religious truth, since, while capable of admiring and depicting it, it is not in a condition to experience and to realise it.

No place in the soul can remain vacant; and on the throne left and occupied by an angel, a demon, be sure of it, will soon take his seat.

To be, I do not say acute and subtle, but merely true, we must have, inwardly at all events, distinguished and analysed a great deal.

I believe that we do well to listen to those who speak of what they love, and even to listen to them with a peculiar interest.

We may have all kinds of courage, and yet not that of the intellect.

Nothing endures in the soul which has not the idea for its internal support; nothing lasts that is purely passive. *Nil citius crescit lacryma.*

Whether we are in the clouds, or above them, we alike escape from the vulgar gaze; and float as you will in the azure and the light, those who no longer discern you are sure to say that you are wrapped in fog and mist.

To the generality of minds distance and the echo are essential. We cannot picture to ourselves that what we so familiarly handle should be extraordinary; and if people came to announce as a great man some one we daily elbowed in the street or met in our walk, we should exclaim against it, "Why, what are you thinking of? Is he not such a

one? How can a man we are so familiar with possibly be a great man?"

Woe to him who has more intellect than he can support! Knowledge helps us to support intellect.

How many very perverse men there are who do no other harm than what they lead others to do!

That which has been most important and worthy of remembrance in a man's life often gains all its beauty only as a pious and secret memory; and in this case at least the possession of a few can hardly without deterioration become the possession of all.

In general, moderation is not very successful in this world. La Rochefoucauld makes it out to be the portion of the weak. But there are two kinds of moderation—the negative and the positive. In an epoch of torpor, force, passion, even a tincture of exaltation, is a sign of power and individuality; but in a period of excess, of party, and violence, moderation is a virtue which can only be preserved by a strong soul.

There are secret folds in the human heart which it will not allow any one but itself to touch with the view of unfolding. This is why systematic and scientific psychology will always remain far inferior, as regards discovery, to a soul that, being endowed with much inward life, involuntarily and ceaselessly reflects itself.

The French mind possesses taste, movement, impetus, but little earnest spirituality.

The French intellect, naturally impatient, and always in a hurry to conclude, sometimes wearies of investigation, and permits itself premature inroads upon the path of abstraction. The reins of argument sometimes fall from the tired hands of criticism, and from time to time we have to fear that the historical faculty, like a new Antæus, may allow itself to be lifted from the solid ground of facts, with which it constantly needs to come in contact, and lose breath and life in the formidable grasp of the Hercules of speculation; and the disadvantage of the present tendency to speculation is, that it connives, perhaps unintentionally and unconsciously, at the fatal progress of moral indifferentism. Under the auspices of history, fatalist theories gradually become the universal doctrine.

General ideas are liberty itself in the domain of thought; are thought taken seriously, and in all its bearings; without these so much decried metaphysics, we get to the bottom of nothing, we know the cause of nothing.

A public feeling, if it be but a sincere feeling, is always worthy of respect.

In philosophy and literature both, we meet with systematic men. These may belong to two different classes; some embrace their circle of ideas with a breadth which allows them to comprehend that of others; some attach themselves exclusively to their own notions, but their exclusiveness is at one with itself. Always there is a dominant unity; but in all

times men of action have been woven of contrasts, and far from enfeebling them, these contrasts have been a condition of their power. The strength of a scientific, synthetical, benevolent, peaceful intellect, is far more beneficent and profound, but it only acts from a distance; the force that immediately affects us is that excited by men who lack this internal harmony.

There may be much frivolity in abstraction. Frivolity does not become earnestness by being dull or heavy; and hollow metaphysics form an admirable envelope for trivial thoughts and vulgar feelings.

All simple ideas are not indeed great, but we may affirm that all great ideas are distinguished by their simplicity.

How many people believe themselves learned and enlightened so soon as they have been rendered competent to deny!

CHAPTER III.

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY.

I.—THEORETICAL PHILOSOPHY.

Philosophical Systems and their value: Rationalism—Christianity and Stoicism; its principle — Deism — Manicheism — Pantheism — Atheism — Scepticism—Eclecticism.

CONSIDERED in its relation to morality, and as a means of influencing our life, the direct value of science amounts pretty nearly to nothing. We shall learn nothing from systems as regards duty. Philosophy, of which so much good and so much evil has been spoken, has rendered great indirect services to humanity, but has afforded it little direct help hitherto. By it men have vainly attempted to fashion a religion, or to reorganise humanity; it has shown itself powerless to give one sentiment of peace or one spark of joy.

Truth, not having been invented by us, belongs less to us, and is less valued by us; but we hold to our systems because they are our own work.

I fancy that logical sceptics must look down somewhat upon the philosophy of rationalists.

Rationalism, which cannot kill a society already formed, is fatal to one newly born; it is love and not pride with which the world should provide itself on the approach of the great distresses that are preparing.

There are innumerable shades of gradation between that complete infidelity which rejects God and the adoption of pure evangelical truth. We class them all under the name of *rationalism*; a degree of Christian faith still mingles with them in divers proportions, and only ceases at deism; and even from deism to atheism the distance is great, for the heart, at least. It is the heart that must be the starting point of the judgment that we form upon men; a very different judgment to that their doctrines deserve.

It was rationalism, not in the theological but the general sense of the word, that created the "Emile" of Rousseau. By this I mean the abuse of reason in all things; rationalism, whose legitimate function should be to explain facts, ignores, distorts, isolates them; distributes them differently to what nature does.

Stoicism is that lofty and severe doctrine, the peculiarity of which is to consider duty and virtue as the only motive that should influence man, and to take into account neither pain nor pleasure. It pursues its end without deviating to right or left, and holds difficulties and perils null and void. Up to a certain point, it is true, absolute obedience to

the rule of morality is beautiful in itself. It would be the half of Christianity were Christianity capable of division. But this obedience is not rendered to God; it is at bottom only self-obedience. In this system man becomes, as it were, his own God. Humility has no part in it; stoicism enjoins a man what he is to do, but neither shows him when he fails nor the means of making up for failure. In letting him ignore his own weakness, it robs man of the help that he would else have found in God. The true stoics have been so by temperament; they were strong souls, in many respects attaining to great heights, but, nevertheless, having weaknesses that they were unconscious of, or caressed; and their virtues were counterbalanced by pride. Voltaire said of stoicism that "it swells the soul, and does not nourish it."

If Christianity did not exist, the stoics would furnish some noble specimens of the human race; but how their doctrine would increase the number of the unhappy! As sole help in weakness, as sole consolation in sorrow, they would but hear an inflexible voice ceaselessly crying, "Advance! advance!" "But I am infirm, wounded, paralysed!" "Never mind! *Thou oughtest to do so.*" This is the only motive offered by stoicism. Christianity, also, bids us advance; but it stretches out a hand to the halting; it raises the powerless; it alone terminates and reunites that ever open circle that no human doctrine is capable of embracing.

Stoicism, which will only admit duty for its object and its motive, always involuntarily pursues another end; it testifies to that inherent necessity of the human soul to seek, if not its support, at least its reward, out of itself. The eagle, without knowing it, hatches peacocks' eggs: stoicism hatches pride; I do not say the pride of the individual, but that of the species.

Stoicism is man making himself God, in order to have one. The stoic, indeed, does sometimes speak of his gods, but in a sense which we must not mistake. They are but another name for his ideal, not the rule or primary reason of his will. The stoic conceives of virtue under this notion of force, not under that of obedience; it does not present itself to him under the aspect of duty, but under that of dignity, whether personal or collective. No doubt that, remotely, an obscure sentiment of duty may be found the source of this notion of virtue; but the stoic conceals this from himself; and if, in this religion of pride, the word *duty* be still pronounced, it means a duty towards oneself, and self-respect is not the motive and substance of all that is right. In this religion there are appearances of a permanent hostility, a war to the knife against the will: these are mere appearances, for to obey one's own self is not to obey at all; and duties, of which we are the first and last term, are not duties.

Whatever be the rational and moral value of stoicism, it has its partisans, and in each of these

its domain and its epoch. It is less a system and a faith than the temperament of some strong spirits; and in these it does not apply itself universally, as does love: it only cultivates a portion of the field of the soul; it is generally obliged to make itself hard, in order to be strong; and, above all, on unexpected occasions it is taught its own limits; after having shattered rocks, it is itself shattered against a grain of sand; it had not uniformly and equally covered the whole soul; its brazen armour, its *æstriplex*, is always incomplete; it disappoints itself cruelly; it does not bend, perhaps, but it breaks; it never stoops, but it falls, and its falls are flagrant in proportion to their height, for stoicism is but the most spiritual form of pride; and "pride," says Eternal Wisdom, "goeth before destruction."

We may say all this without contempt, without depreciation, nay, even while humbling oneself before stoicism. The believer who is conscious of being supported, may admire those who endeavour to support themselves; but he admires them with alarm and compassion, for he sees their danger, and he knows, at all events, that man, so tenderly taught to say, "Thy will be done," has never been invited to say so to himself. If there be a God, it is to Him that this invocation must be addressed—fully, absolutely, unreservedly.

The uneducated man is alternately deist and pantheist, fatalist, and devotee, and all this beneath the vague but constant profession of some faith or

other, traditional or authoritative. Thus the disease of the learned torments the multitude as well, but more obscurely, without name or formula; and just as the learned, in the interest of thought, require to be enlightened and healed, so does the multitude, in the interest of life.

The immense majority of men can only have any religious life at all under the form of positive Christianity. A man who should prove an exception to this rule, and feel within him a fervent need of religion for himself and others, would in vain exert the energy of his will, and the power of his eloquence, in the direction of deism; he would eternally remain a teacher without a school, a captain without soldiers.

The deism of our day is, more or less, tinged with Christianity; this is why it does not, necessarily, like that of antiquity, lose and dissolve itself in fatalism. But whatever it may be, and even taking it in its happiest examples, let us allow that the faith of the deist is but an opinion—a very vague and very vacillating opinion, which, as a motive of action, does not equal the faith of the heathen. Let deism have, at least, its fakeers, who, to please their deity, submit to be crushed beneath the wheels of his car, and then we will own deism to be a religion.

According to the generally admitted meaning of the term, a deist is a man who professes to believe in the existence of a God, but who does not trouble himself much about serving or pleasing him—a man,

in short, who recognises the being of God, but without adoring him.

The pantheistic instinct is found everywhere; and you will be less surprised to hear me say this when I have defined pantheism as the idea of fatalism, combined with that of order and of unity. Amongst many causes that favour this tendency, we must number the spectacles afforded us by political and social movements for the last half century; the increasingly felt and extending powers of what are called the ideas or spirit of the time; the enfeeblement of the conscience—that internal necessity which, when called to resist external necessities (numbers more especially), has pronounced itself incapable, and thrown up the game; lastly, we must needs admit it, a need to organise the social world as soon as possible, and the impossibility of giving it for centre a personal god who is no longer believed in. When God, whose *name* must remain, whether or no, is no longer a *person*, how continue to speak of human personality? If the pantheistic doctrine were hostile to *individualism*, it would be little to be feared; but, on the contrary, it is favourable to it, and only threatens *individuality*. Now the State Church has not, it is true, sprung from pantheism, and seems the older of the two in our societies, but it is none the less true,—refer its origin to any time you like,—that it coincides with pantheism, with which it has in common the implicit negation of individuality; hence pantheism, if it cannot overthrow the Christian reli-

gion, which is in the best sense the religion of individuality, will take care to uphold State churches: the idea of the State, on which is based the whole philosophy of the institution, the idea which we have been combating is, after all, but a fragment of pantheism.

That which pantheism and humanitarianism have of true (and who can deny them their portion of truth?) remains without force, nay, more, loses its strength, being separated from its roots; and by these roots I mean the Gospel, which, in recognising humanity as a reality in itself, as a unity, and in recommending it to our interest as such, rather looks upon a single man as a complete whole, than the whole world as a single man;—the Gospel, which, by filling and pervading everything with the *presence* of God, forbids and makes it impossible for us to transform everything into His *essence*. Thus the portion of truth in these doctrines vanishes, and lends them no beneficial influence; the false alone remains and operates. It operates as the negation of the true, extirpating from the human mind those ideas which give force to the idea of God and sanction to duty. It gradually dissolves within the soul all that such ideas had of positive and useful. It only leaves theories, so to speak, instead of a solid substance, unembodied forms. Wondrously adapted to our epoch, it secretly conspires with its most decided tendencies. It relaxes and unbinds, under the pretence of widening, the sheaf of

our convictions. It causes the evaporation of the religious sentiment, under the pretence of purifying it; and of the moral law, under that of ennobling it. Were it only a simple philosophical theorem unrelated to the condition of society, it would tell little upon morals. But as with the spring tides of ocean, there is a conjunction here, one celestial body concurring with another, and what the doctrine alone could not effect upon the age, it can effect aided by that age, and most assuredly it will effect.

Manicheism is only an acute, acerbated, scoffing atheism; pantheism is only an emphatic and solemn atheism.

At the present time, I own, men deny Arimanes and Satan. But we must affirm the one or the other. Pantheism is no refuge from this necessity; it is but a variety of manicheism. The earnest and consistent philosopher will not believe in God if he do not believe in Satan.

The majority of minds, in the free exploration of doctrines, meet with a certain point where anxiety and scepticism begin to reign; it is just where one has acquired too much light to be contented with an ancient prejudice, and has not yet enough to embrace the whole truth. But the mind which has made any progress in the path of free inquiry does not retreat, can no longer resume its chains, or interrupt its march; and, after having traversed that difficult defile of Dante, through which each unshackled intellect must pass, it finds itself with delight in that

smooth, fertile, and vast plain of faith into which its courage has led it.

Although we may arrive at a condition where all is light, they are the unfavoured and unprivileged who have never doubted.

If a Pascal have endured the anguish of doubt, I think him none the less great for that. At all events, there are certain subjects upon which we are never thoroughly convinced till after we have doubted. They are like those buildings of which only an earthquake could consolidate the foundations.

The doubts of an earnest mind seem to us more edifying than the premature certainty of a light nature, or the imperturbable assurance of an arid and narrow mind, which has never had its disdainful beatitude disturbed by anything.

To admit doubt otherwise than in the quality of a method for arriving at truth, to present it to us as though it were to be the normal and final state of human intelligence here below, is to mistake the conditions of that intelligence.

Scepticism is to the mind what irresolution is to the character—a sort of incapacity for concluding, a love of indefinite temporising, which considers contradictory arguments without ever weighing them; in a word, a weakness or an indolence of the intellect.

Scepticism, which at first sight seems a disease of the mind, is in reality a disease of the heart.

Scepticism originates either in the corruption of

the political state, or in the degradation of the philosophical spirit.

When once doubt enters into the sanctuary of the soul moral ideas do not long remain firm ; they yield their ground before the floating impulses of sensibility, and thus men arrive, through the delicate enjoyment of the heart, and the most refined pleasures of the mind, at the sphere of which the *ego* is the centre and the pivot, where sensibility borders on sensuality, where moral well-being differs only in degree from the physical well-being ; in a word, they arrive at epicureanism. Such is the natural and almost necessary progress of scepticism.

A nation where the majority finds itself attacked with the disease of scepticism feels the sap of life oozing away, and if no salutary crisis remove it from this condition it has only to await dissolution.

The doubts of the mind, when the heart is convinced, are only a cloud mistaken for a wall : the hand might, indeed, pass through the cloud and grasp the desired possession beyond ; but then the man believes it to be a wall, and does not attempt to do so.

Just as I fly from a libertine who preaches modesty, I detest as I do the "gates of hell" a dogmatising pyrrhonism. The conclusion which it permits itself, be it what it may, is exorbitant, monstrous, because it *is* a conclusion ; its faith, properly understood, is but a stroke of despair, an accident, a catastrophe ; there is a whole infinite between pyrrhonism and faith. It is

strange audacity to begin by breaking all the rounds of the ladder by which we hope to hoist ourselves to the housetop ; it is strange wisdom to pretend to prove anything whatever after having annihilated all the elements of proof.

When scepticism dogmatises it, scorpion-like, wounds itself.

If the flatterers of humanity are pitiable, what sentiment think you should they inspire who, in light-heartedness, with a bitter enjoyment, satirise it, and drag us, to the sound of sarcasms, and with shouts of impious laughter, to the funeral of hope? What name must we bestow on those who unnecessarily insult us with the display of a disease without remedy, and a misery without consolation? Certainly, if ever the influence of the monarch of evil is clearly seen, it is when throwing light on the most afflicting sides of human life ; constantly calling back our glances and fixing them there, multiplying discoveries of our weakness, and intoxicating our pride with the picture of our wretchedness, he stops us at the limit which it is so important for us to cross, and represses the noblest of curiosities by that fatal sentence which already has sealed the condemnation of the Just, " What is truth ? "

It has been said that doubt is a soft pillow for a sound head ; it is not so, we fully believe, for a healthy heart.

The same man often contains the obstinate sceptic and the blind and deaf fanatic. Where presumptuous beliefs incorporate themselves so thoroughly

with the soul that they can no longer detach themselves, they become a preconception, a fixed idea, a grave insanity that nothing disconcerts, that objections offend, that opposition strengthens, that time hardens, to which everything serves as proof and confirmation.

The modern world presents to the observer a singular medley of frivolous scepticism and conventional dogmatism. We say *medley*, and not *conflict*, because this dogmatism has its sphere, and so also has this scepticism. What ought to be affirmed is placed in doubt; what ought to be doubted is affirmed. Whilst a corroding uncertainty attaches itself to the axioms of common sense, to the intuitions of conscience, a peremptory certainty—an appalling certainty, Fontenelle would have said—consumes for them (as fire burns the thicket) the most confusing intricacies of the most formidable problems. We are surrounded by mysteries; mysteries are at the very base of our life; the most common, the most elementary things are at the same time the most prodigious; and yet not a doubt on these subjects, not a question, nay, nothing which can lead us to suspect that we have examined or reflected. It is toward the luminous points that doubts run, and questions press. A philosopher used to wonder that men wondered so little; he had only to turn his eyes in another direction to wonder that they wondered so much.

To give the thing its true name, eclecticisim is but the negative of philosophy.

Eclecticism is only true as an instinct; it is vain as a system, since it does not bring before us the central idea, around which all the scattered elements of the philosophy of humanity should group themselves, and live with one common life.

II.—PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY.

Evil: Matter — Mind — Utilitarianism, Pessimism, and Optimism—Eudemonism, Happiness, and Duty.

We are tired of hearing men talk of the force of Christian doctrines and never of their moderation—more miraculous, if possible, and stronger than that very force. Outside of Christianity, both before and after its appearance, the *saturnalia* of asceticism have been almost as gross as those of materialism. Forced to curse something, and not choosing to curse himself, man has cursed his flesh; a clever diversion, intended to spare the very victim which God demands. Christianity could hardly have surpassed this useless suicide as already practised; it never, wonderful to say, entertained such an idea for a moment; at the first step it occupied the centre of the true by establishing itself in the centre of the man. From that position it embraces everything at a glance, and dominates everything. The heart subjected, all is subjected; and the submissive heart is a wise heart, which no more permits arbitrary sacrifice than car-

nal indulgence. Matter, from having been supreme, becomes a slave; but the man no longer dreams of avenging his own wrong-doing upon matter. With this idea that of expiation naturally vanishes; the man expiates nothing: he loves, he obeys, he hopes, he places himself entirely at the service and at the mercy of God.

Absolute asceticism has engendered in the region of the pure intellect crimes before which all other crimes grow pale. There evil, if one may so speak, takes occasion from nothing; depends only upon itself. Elsewhere nature serves as a pretext, here evil itself is sometimes the object of a horrible desire. And without dwelling on this dread excess, does human malice require the connivance and excitement of the flesh in those sometimes atrocious crimes to which pride, ambition, and fanaticism give birth? We must, then, acknowledge that all evil does not reside in matter.

There are sins which have so little connection with the flesh that a disembodied spirit might commit them; there are vices whose very spirituality excites them to fury. What is it that sins, I pray you, in that man who only grants reluctantly the absolutely necessary to nature; who seems to have crucified the flesh with the lusts thereof more successfully than the greatest saint; who appears insensible to pleasure and even to pain, and is, nevertheless, so ready to hate; whose revenge is implacable, whose resentment is eternal, whose words are venomous, whose

glance homicidal? What is it in him that sins if not the soul, and the soul only? And do the most sensual of men commit some of these sins? And have not some of these sins the effect of preserving us from others? When the flesh is engaged in evil the soul is, doubtless, in a state of sin; but when the soul is occupied with evil is not the flesh often in a state of actual innocence? How deny these facts, and on the other hand how reconcile them with the opinion that all sin resides in matter?

You risk much in saying that it is matter that sins, for matter being irresponsible, all the part in sin that you assign to it is so much removed out of the sphere of responsibility. And this part might possibly seem to you so considerable that the share of the soul would dwindle away. Is not the responsibility of matter the favourite argument of libertines? Thus, then, by a reaction, as strange as just, there is materialism in this exaggerated spiritualism. Matter revenges your accusations by accepting them. In taking upon itself the iniquities of the soul it casts them off; it carries away with it your scruples, and flies, like the scapegoat, to the desert, where you will never reach it more.

Matter, in an absolute sense, is inert; it is no more capable of sinning than of doing right. It is indifferent. The most that we can assert is, that in our fallen state it is weak—that is to say, too heavy to lend itself to the movements, and too slow to follow the impulses of the mind, if by that word we desig-

nate the organ of the true and the just. It is an instrument which cannot act upon itself, and which becomes good or evil according to the action that the soul, or the immaterial principle, exercises over it. It is this principle that corrupts it, and makes it peccant; it is the soul that sins: *the soul that sinneth*, says the Gospel, is that which shall die. If the soul did not sin, matter would never sin; or rather, indeed, it never does sin. It serves as an instrument to sin just as it might serve as an instrument to righteousness.

Unless we efface from the list of sins, and rank amidst indifferent actions, all those bad actions in which matter has evidently no part, we must allow that the soul may sin without the concurrence of the body, and thenceforth we must abandon the formula that asserts evil to reside in matter.

St. John expressly assigns three roots to the tree of evil: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is also a lust; and in all these three it is the soul which wills, pursues, and does the evil.

The unity of evil is declared by the unity of its name. In assigning to it one only name, we assign to it one only principle. If evil were not *one* it would not be evil. It is *one* as the good is *one*; and doubtless no one will contest that if the good be not *one* it is nothing. But where shall we find that unity in good and that unity in evil, without which the very notion of good and of evil escapes us and

vanishes away? We must reascend beyond subordinate notions, and not stop short in particular forms of good and evil. But how find a principle of unity elsewhere than in the Being who is the very principle of unity, and out of whose idea the very idea of unity has no basis? Do away with the idea of God, the unity of good dissolves; the idea even of good has no longer any reason for existing. In a created being good is necessarily a relation, for outside of the Absolute Being all is relative. Good, then, is a right proportion between the creature and the Creator. But good in the moral creature implies the great and impenetrable mystery of personality.

Humanity, or rather the intelligent creature in general, is the Eve of God, with this immense difference, that God has not been passive, like Adam, in the production of this collective Eve, but active, free, and sovereign. We dare to see in humanity the Eve of God, drawn from the substance of God as was that other Eve from the substance of Adam, but invested with spontaneity, with liberty, and alone able, in the universality of things, to say *I*, as God says *I*, distinguishing itself at once both from things and from God; separated from God in order to be able to unite; and that over and above the involuntary and passive unity there might be a voluntary unity, whose true name is no more unity, but union, obedience, love.

The difficulty is to say *I* after God without being tempted to say *I* like God. The difficulty for the

being who can say, *I am*, is not to add, *and there is none beside me*. The danger is the making oneself God; for it is making oneself God to pass from liberty to independence, and wish to understand that we only belong to ourselves in order that we may give ourselves away. This danger arose at one precise moment. Sin took occasion from the commandment which *had* been given to constitute human morality. Under the impression of the commandment, Eve, that is to say humanity, *conceived* and gave birth, we know to what,—sin, no doubt, but even before sin, to morality.

What was the object of man when he separated himself from God by sin? It was the *ego*. But the *ego* is at once immaterial and material. The body is not merely a vestment, a husk; the body forms part of the man, the body is one form of the *ego*. Accordingly sin, like the *ego*, had two forms. But still sin was *one* as the *ego* is *one*, and it passed from the centre to the circumference, and not from the circumference to the centre, which is the soul.

As soon as we attribute a part of evil to the soul we must attribute to it the whole. Either it has no responsibility, or it is alone responsible. You may persuade the soul that it is soul and not matter that is passive, but you will never persuade it that matter takes the initiative and nothing more.

Crime does not merely spring from a judgment more or less false: if in vice the judgment indeed be concerned, still evil has its root in the heart; it is the

heart that has seduced the mind, and it is the absence, or the false direction, of the moral sense that determines the false reasoning. Man has his basis not in reasoning but in feeling; the majority of crimes are committed without judgment, or against the judgment of the criminal.

There are a thousand occasions where we have to say, "This thing has been useful because it was good," and not "It was good, because it proved useful." If this answer was not sufficient, moral order and unity of creation would be pure chimera.

We are not born utilitarian; we become so.

It is no longer said as heretofore that duty is prejudice; an arbitrary and factitious thing. Neither is right attacked as formerly; it is no longer subordinated to utility: people manage better now-a-days, and confound the one with the other; they try to show that a proper study of men's interests renders a theory of rights superfluous. In a word, facts have everywhere been substituted for principles, without however denying, or discussing, these last; a thorough confidence is entertained that the best way of getting rid of a doctrine is not to attack it, but to raise another which shall gradually render the former useless, as a prop that supports nothing.

In most cases interest proves a poor compass. Merely to seek our own advantage is not all; we have to discern what is our greatest advantage, the advantage which can never become a loss; and in order to discern this, how much knowledge,

what researches, what labour may not frequently be wanted!

The supreme utility is to be just; and what is just always ends by being of great social utility. God has not willed that justice and public happiness should be incompatible; far from it, He has united the two by closest bonds. Could governments have been sooner convinced of these truths history would transmit to us fewer groans, and fewer cries for vengeance.

There is no medium: if against an absolute duty some great interest may be alleged, so may a little interest as well; if the interest of many, then also the interest of the individual. If truth can cease to be truth, this may happen at the shock of the least inconvenience as well as in collision with the greatest. If the useful be the *criterion* of the true, this criterion must be instantaneous, immediate, universal: if the useful be the criterion of the true, it is not the true that is true but the useful; in other words, if the true be not true in itself, there is no truth.

Far be it from us even to make the useful the touchstone of the true. The true is not the useful, the useful is not the true; but eventually, and viewing things from a proper height, the true is useful, and the useful is true. Man needs to be generally persuaded of this, and, such as he is, nothing would demoralise him more than to be obliged to believe that the useful springs from the false as well as the true,

and that the true is as hurtful as the false. Let him, on the contrary, be well assured that in itself, and apart from peculiar interventions of God, evil is never necessary, never useful.

The revival of utilitarianism amongst us is not spontaneous ; it is provoked by a general disposition to scepticism, which itself depends in great measure on that succession of political commotions of which Europe has been the theatre. Badly armed against a crowd of questions of conscience that events gave rise to from day to day, and that the moral faith of olden times would have summarily resolved, individuals, nay, states even, have been obliged to those who came to tell them aloud what they had already been only whispering to themselves, that there was to be found somewhere else a safer and more convenient *criterion* of the goodness of actions. Utilitarianism has enriched itself somewhat dishonourably with the possessions of one proscribed ; I mean the moral sentiment banished from life.

Utilitarians themselves teach us that, rigidly speaking, their system has no direct proofs. Their logic reduces itself pretty much to this : conscience cannot prove itself, therefore the reins of life fall into the hands of life ; a logical argument assuredly in so far as it is true that conscience cannot prove itself, but an argument which contains in itself an important avowal, namely, that the empire of life only falls to interest by right of disherison.

It is affirmed that it will always be impossible to

steer balloons, because, entirely surrounded as they are with air, they cannot come in contact with a denser medium which should partially remove them from the power of the atmosphere. Applying this illustration to the egotism which constitutes interest the only master of human life, we find it difficult to conceive, as a general thesis, that what is good for impelling is good also for holding back; and the old idea of opposing contraries to each other, conscience to interest, the just to the useful, appears to us more solid than this moral homœopathy, which has on its side neither nature nor experience.

The great argument of utilitarians is that conscience cannot prove itself. Now we affirm that conscience can prove itself.

The word exists, therefore the thing exists. The idea of right is in the world, therefore right is a reality. Utilitarians tell us that men have invented both the word and the idea; but it is not thus that men invent.

There exists between the right and the useful the same difference as between a law and a fact. The right is a rule engraved in human nature by a creative hand, the idea for which the world of spirits exists; the useful is a property of our organisation, as subordinate to the right as are facts to ideas. The right is the motive of our existence; the useful is its condition. The right is God in us; the useful is the *ego* of each one of us.

Man is pessimist if Christianity be not. Man does

not dislike to be spoken to about the misery of his condition. In detail, and from hour to hour, we are all pessimists, and it would be difficult to surprise us in the very fact of contentment. Mme. de la Valliere, in her cloistral solitude, used to say to visitors, "I am not happy, I am content." We are, generally speaking, at bottom neither happy nor contented. In theory, and with regard to the universe, we most of us hold that things as a whole go on pretty well; and, pessimist in fact, we express ourselves indignantly against pessimism. Optimism has zealous champions, and in a certain sense with good right too. Pascal himself was an optimist in the sense to which we allude. He believed, as we do, in perfectibility, in progress; but the happiness in which he as well as we had faith, was in his eyes a superficial, relative happiness; and on the other hand, he believed in a deep, profound, radical unhappiness of human nature, an unhappiness of which the impalpable and immaterial part is the true unhappiness in his eyes.

But if the true religion be pessimist, pessimism is not the whole of religion; it must needs tend towards contentment and even joy.

Optimists are only strong, or only appear so, in thrusting aside God from the government of things created, and in putting indifferent and insensible nature into His place. They say that nature cares for the species, and in no way for the individual; and accordingly, partial or individual misfortunes ought not to surprise us, for these misfortunes, we

are told, never affect species, and provided they be spared *all is well*. Even in adopting the starting point of philosophers we shall not, however, find their system invulnerable. In the first place, what do they mean by *species*? It is very possible that a certain species of animal should one day disappear from the face of the globe, exterminated by some other species that nature itself has introduced for this very extermination. Will they then allow that nature has been wanting to itself? But let us lay aside that objection, and go at once to the principal vice of the system.

This vice lies in the name that it bears. It ought not to be called optimism, for it establishes that all is necessary, and not that all is good. It is vain to show us that, dating from the starting point, the sequence of effects is necessary and continuous; does it follow, then, that all is good? It is strange that these philosophers should reproach their adversaries with the arbitrary application of the word *evil*, while they apply the word *good* in the very same way. Where do they find the standard of that good? With what rule do they compare the whole of creation in order to pronounce that whole is good? Goodness means that which is conformable to the purpose or the desire of some being or other; this notion is necessarily subjective. In order that an object be called good there must be some one who finds it good; that is to say, corresponding with his aim and desires. Now has nature any aim, or does it form any wishes?

All that can be said is, that the chain of the effects nature produces is conformable to its first premiss, or first fact. But by what right or upon what grounds shall we assert that first premiss to be good? I find it, I confess, more natural, as do the pessimists, to take individual sensibility as the touchstone of the order of things, and to say, "Creatures suffer; hence all is not good."

Optimists should abdicate their borrowed name, and content themselves by saying, "As far as we can, we see all is necessary." Heart-breaking doctrine, but neither to be answered nor refuted by drawing out a long act of accusation against nature, which cares not for it, which does not even hear it, and whose chariot, rolling incessantly in its inflexible orbit, crushes under the same wheel its accuser and defender both. But if the idea of God, drawn from the depths of human consciousness; the idea of God, invincible belief, inalienable attribute of our nature; the idea of God, in logical order the first of our ideas, comes to substitute its living faith for the dead idea of nature; if the good pleasure of God becomes the supreme necessity of the world, everything takes a new aspect. What matters it that effects should appear to us linked with causes, details bound to the whole by an adamant chain? All this necessity is absorbed and lost in the will of God. In presence of that Eternal Being, in whom all is simultaneous, immense, to whom all is present, infinite, to whom all is one, shall we refuse to admit that each event

is at once the necessary sequence of a cause that He has preordained, and the proximate result of an immediate act of His will, so that the thing that He has commanded ages ago, He still commands the moment that it happens? In a word, shall we dare to deny that special and most special providence is incompatible with the general providence? No; God has prepared from eternity, or rather, He has embraced in a single act of His thought, the infinite chain of successive, combined, and interlaced causes which bring about at this moment the falling of a hair from my head, the escaping of a sigh from my breast; yet it is by His express and immediate will that these two accidents have just happened; He has willed from eternity that this hair should fall, this sigh be heaved. He is free and sovereign at each moment, as though each moment He was recommencing the work of creation; as though, instead of fixed and general laws, He himself acted uninterruptedly in every particular case; for though He has granted a constitution to the universe, He is, nevertheless, an absolute monarch still. Equally independent in the government of moral creatures, He applies to each at every moment the discipline, the disposition, that best suits him; deals with the soul day by day, as though He followed the maxim that "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." He prepares the trial for the soul; prepares in the soul the prayer that is to conquer the trial, and prepares to grant that prayer. When once God, the God of eternity, and the God of the instant, is thus

placed in the room of necessity, we say no longer with the optimist, *all is well*, nor with the pessimist, *all is ill*; but we say, God reigns. We suffer, but we have sinned; we suffer, but eternity, which belongs to God, is also ours; the world groans, the whole creation sighs, but God, who has not made sin, does not either make suffering. There is a mystery here which He will explain to us one day. What we do know is, that all things work together for good to them that love God. Let us lay hold on this word, and, renouncing our fruitless researches, let us press forward to the goal that He has set before us.

It is not only for the soul, it is for the mind as well, that happiness is a necessity: happiness, then, is part of truth. To claim it pure and unalterable has, accordingly, nothing that dishonours us; and the man most thoroughly liberated from the empire of the senses—the most disinterested of men—demands it in this sense no less vehemently than the miser, the libertine, or the selfish. From this want—an honourable want in this point of view—results a more or less severe appreciation of human destiny, which is submitted to our judgment upon the same ground, and in the same way, as moral actions. Great minds, indeed, have professed optimism; but optimism is doomed. Natural wisdom and Christian wisdom have agreed in condemning it. It is true that from one same judgment they have drawn very different conclusions; but this is all that separates them. I am wrong: in the very appreciation of facts they

have necessarily differed on many points; but it is enough that they should have pronounced the same verdict on the whole. An earnest philosophy is naturally pessimist. Pessimism is one of the doctrines, or one of the bases of the doctrine, of Pascal.

At bottom, if we take any count of individual judgments, the whole world, in one sense or other, is really pessimist. We may, indeed, as a general thesis, affirm that all goes well; but who is there who is contented even among the happy—or rather, especially among them? Who is there that is contented, except such as, like St. Paul, and in the same school as St. Paul, have “learned to be content.” Add up all the miscalculations and murmurs, and tell us if their sum be not pessimism.

It is a marvel peculiar to the Gospel that when we attempt, from its point of view, to distinguish the means it offers from the end it proposes, sacrifices from their reward, the present from the future, earth from heaven, we can hardly do it, so completely *one* is the destiny of man, so much is truth one, so much are duty and happiness—separated in our mind by the effects of our fall—at bottom one and the same thing. In the Gospel, the reward of loving is to love more; the reward of seeing is to see still better.

The soul is only fully happy when, united to its principle, it forgets itself, sees no longer anything, but its principle loses itself therein, and is, with regard

to the God it loves, henceforth only a mirror, an altar, or an echo.

The element of happiness contained in the Gospel has nothing contrary to love, which, according to the expression of St. James, "is the end or sum of the commandment;" and on the other side, how well has Christianity, by developing treasures of love in the human heart, proved that it contained in itself, together with happiness, and in that very happiness, a fertile principle of benevolence and charity!

Nothing in the world, or out of the world, can make a being, whose will is one with the will of God, otherwise than happy by that very fact; such a one would be so even in the dwelling-place of the reprobate.

If the Christian religion be so far removed from excluding or putting aside the idea of happiness that, on the contrary, it begins by offering it; if this offer be its first word and first fact, it is because it can, no more than any other religion, help commencing thus. Nay, if anything distinguishes it, in this respect, from other religions, it is the being more gratuitously liberal; it is the giving all to those who have given nothing—securing all to such as have promised nothing. But its gifts are spiritual, invisible, drawn upon eternity, and its exactions are present, immediate, inexorable, unlimited. It does more than point out happiness as the consequence of submission; it places it in that very submission itself—obedience is more than the means of felicity, it is that felicity.

Religion finds the love of happiness and the principle of duty separated within us, and its mission, its masterpiece, is to reunite these. Christianity accepts the question as it is proposed. In promising, in offering happiness, has it obtained love? or has it, in offering happiness, closed souls against love? This is the whole question.

We remit our answer to those other adversaries of Christianity who complain so loudly and long that Christianity is entirely made up of renunciations and sacrifices, and that, foolishly dispossessing us of ourselves, it gives us over as a prey to the first comer.

It is not surprising that Christianity should have brought upon itself two such contradictory reproaches—that of exacting too much, and that of exacting too little renunciation.

Far from repudiating, in the name of Christianity, these two reproaches, we accept them both—nay, we even improve upon them. In one sense of the word it is not enough to say that Christianity concedes too much to interest, or that Christianity gives too much to duty. Too much, a little too much, a great deal too much! these are vague terms, for which we would substitute absolute ones. We say, because it is the truth, that Christianity grants *everything* to interest, and grants *everything* to duty. And we say, further, that this must needs be the case, since Christianity, if true, must correspond with that which is essential and ineradicable in human nature. It is

upon this nature that the reproaches directed against Christianity should be laid. For it is of this nature that it may be affirmed that it contains two opposite principles, of which each is absolute; each claims to occupy the whole soul.

If one wanted to wonder, or to be offended at anything, it should be at this fact first of all. Yet no one dreams of reproaching human nature with this contradiction, because this nature is a fact that there is no changing, and which must needs be accepted as it is. But why should we wonder at what is found in man being found in religion also? Why should a religion be thought suspicious for reproducing this phenomenon rather than for not reproducing it? How is it that this fact, instead of leading us to judge it false, does not make us presume it true?

Faith is not only the firm assurance that everything will end well for him that believes; it is, in the first instance, the adhesion of the soul to a principle. Now a principle is not true because its applications are happy; but they are happy because it is true: thus a duty performed ever contains the germ of a happiness; but it is not for this that it is a duty. It is obligatory in itself and independent of consequences, although it is impossible that its consequences should not be good. The very word *duty* implies this guarantee. No one, in the bottom of his soul, can conceive a virtue that renders unhappy; sacrifice has always its compensations, within or without a man, sooner or later, here or elsewhere, it matters

not which; this compensation is certain, complete, superabundant. One knows this, one feels it, but he who would *see* it as well, would be but imperfectly impressed with the sentiment of obligation.

A false religion would get rid of the problem by denying it; the true religion ought to recognise and confess it. Her task, her triumph, her glory, is not to obscure the terms of the problem, but to reduce them to unity,—is out of these two feelings, hitherto so diverse and so contradictory, to make one feeling in our hearts.

III.—PHILOSOPHY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Its Principle (Common Sense); its Mission; its Prejudices.

The contempt of man is at the bottom of all that Voltaire has written on man and human affairs.

The philosophy of Voltaire is assuredly not the true—nay, it is hardly to be called philosophy; it is good sense, sometimes a high kind of good sense; it is that commonplace wisdom of the respectable people of all times, of the cultivated and well-to-do, which steers between stoicism and epicureanism—doubtless keeping much nearer to the last than the first, but never abandoning itself entirely; affirming nothing too strongly, not pressing hard on any of the consequences of what it affirms—above all, avoiding all dogmatic pretensions and a speculative tone. If Voltaire enervates the doctrines of

the seventeenth century, he mitigates those of the eighteenth, to which he always seemed to be saying, "Don't go so far;" or, "Don't go so fast!" His philosophy is not materialist in the proper sense of the word, it rather becomes so involuntarily and in practice, rather than in intention. It expresses modern civilisation, not in its extremes, but in what it has of most agreeable and most generally accepted.

Voltaire's philosophy never rose above common sense; and by this very circumstance he denied philosophy, for philosophy consists precisely in laying stress upon common sense in order afterwards to transcend it. Voltaire has made the fulcrum the end; he was the apostle of that class of generally received ideas, and sometimes prejudices, which is commonly honoured with the title of good sense. The strength of Voltaire lay in giving to good sense passion for its interpreter.

After all, there was a vengeance to be consummated; a justice to get itself accomplished: there were whole centuries to be expiated. Christianity, in becoming an earthly power, had taken a corrupting element into itself, and passed its own sentence of condemnation. It needed to be sent back into the desert. The whole work of Voltaire was a necessity and a preparation.

The philosophy of the eighteenth century is a reaction. It erases everything; gets rid of all tradition and all authority. It desires to build a new

dwelling, but it would rather live out of doors in the wind and rain than re-enter the old abode. It is more bent upon destroying than creating. What age has ever willed two things at once? Its character is essentially negative.

Yes; prejudice, that great object of the detestation of the eighteenth century; prejudice, a word by which the philosophers of the day have so often summed up all opinions that they did not hold; prejudice is the original sin of the philosophy of the eighteenth century. It is by a prejudice, common sense, instinct, appearances, vulgar opinions, that they have killed all other prejudices.

One day perhaps we may retrace all the evil done to the nations under this false name of good sense, the born enemy of philosophy, religion, and enthusiasm; of all, in short, that raises individuals and nations out of the dust. In morality it is called interest, well understood; in philosophy, first appearances; in religion, materialism. All of corrupt and mischievous belonging to the eighteenth century got accomplished under the name of good sense. All of base and ignoble that the nineteenth century drags after it towards its glorious future loudly professes itself to be good sense. This good sense, the genius of the dregs of society, the inspiration of the most vulgar moments of life, has not always successfully disputed the world against its mysterious rival, that sublime unknown, that illustrious unnamed, that wanderer without earthly origin, which

has no other credentials to offer humanity except its inimitable accent.

The human heart recognises this accent as having heard it before in another world. At this voice the masses arise, wondering at themselves; the invisible and immaterial, like a powerful magnet, hold them for some moments suspended in the void. But the antagonist force, the good, or rather the bad sense of human nature, has also its turn, has its hours of triumph. And how much more universal is its empire, how far more spontaneous the obedience rendered it, how much more rapid the victories that it gains! The stone does not rise without some resistance; it feels none in falling: this is the natural tendency of its movement; this is its *good sense*. In certain times, on certain questions, pitch good sense against philosophy, good sense against devotedness, against faith, the victory will be on the side of good sense, unless, indeed, philosophy, devotedness, and faith know how to be obstinately resolved.

Universal consent, in its purity, is prejudice raised into a dogma; is brutal force put in the place of law; is *space and duration*.

Do you see that man who, commissioned to light on the summit of a tower the beacon fire destined in the midst of night and tempest to guide distressed sailors into port, mockingly places there, instead of brilliant and far-shedding jets of flame, the paltry lamp which an hour ago scarcely availed to light up a corner of his own narrow room? such is the philo-

sophy of common sense. Must not a man have fallen very low, must not his soul be very torpid, if not quite dead, before he can seriously apply to religious questions the narrow principles of mere common sense ?

SECOND SECTION.
APPLIED PHILOSOPHY.

CHAPTER I.

RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY.

I.—RELATIONS BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND PHILOSOPHY.

1. *Nature of the Problem: Insoluble objectively—
Conflicting claims—Services rendered to Chris-
tianity by Philosophy.*

THE question of the relations and respective claims of reason and faith, so often discussed already, is, we think, destined to be so often again. By most authors it gets insensibly confounded with a different one, that of the relations between Christianity and philosophy. We confess that we in no way understand this last, taken in its generality. What is philosophy? All the world is agreed that it is free-thinking; human thought in the greatest spontaneity of which it is capable. But what is Christianity? In itself one thing only, it is twenty different things according to different minds. It ought then to be stated first of all, and this is almost always omitted, of what Christianity men purpose to treat. Then the question pro-

poses itself in the following terms : Does philosophy, or liberty of thought, naturally arrive at such a given Christianity ? But it will still be necessary, and this is difficult to define the liberty of free thought. Biassed thoughts are not free, and thought may be biassed in more than one way. If some in thinking freely, or wishing at least to do so, harmonise from point to point with Christian dogmas, may it not be said that they have unconsciously taken for starting point what they call the term ? And if others, equally free-thinking, do not arrive at these dogmas, may not this be because, without knowing it, they were resolved not to arrive there ? To the Christian who philosophises and continues to call himself a Christian, it will be objected, you wind your Christianity on the reel of philosophy ; to the philosopher who becomes a believer without abjuring philosophy many will exclaim, your Christianity is but your philosophy, under cover of an evangelical nomenclature. The evolution in either sense may alike have a great value subjectively ; but an objective value is almost invariably denied it. Nevertheless, those who have made or undergone the same evolution, are well entitled to consider their respective experiences as the counter-proof and verification of each other.

We believe that a sincere philosophy must unconsciously tend towards Christianity ; we hold that it is constrained by a kind of magnetic attraction to invert the task assigned to it by M. Cousin ; after having

endeavoured to raise Christianity up to itself it will end by lowering itself to Christianity, for as for taking a third part, and trying to ignore and make abstraction of Christianity, there is no likelihood of that.

Besides its intrinsic worth, besides its numerous uses, besides its appearing to us to have finally brought over to the Gospel more souls than it has detached from it, we do not overlook the fact that no one becomes a Christian without becoming a philosopher; and this simple and profound philosophy, that each believer unwittingly draws from Christianity, has a great deal to do with the solidity of his faith, with his understanding of religious things, with the consistency of his piety, and the unity of his life.

If by religion be understood a positive revelation of the designs of God with regard to the human race, and by philosophy that speculation which, embracing all questions and all problems, seeks for the unity of the great whole and the secret of God, we confront with each other two absolute pretensions—two systems of general regulation of our thoughts and actions; nor must we shrink from saying that, taken at this height, religion and philosophy reciprocally deny each other.

Philosophy has no alternative; it must either accuse itself or religion of falsehood. So soon as it recognises religion as true, it must needs confess that religion knows more than it does; the religion

that did not know more than philosophy would necessarily be false.

If philosophy adopt religion for the starting point of its speculations, it then deserts its own peculiar principles, and absolutely changes its character. Purely intellectual as, at all events, it pretends to be, free from direct interest in the good as in the useful, it consents to take its premisses from religion, which is an affair of the heart and conscience; and, by so doing, it impregnates itself with a foreign element, it renounces all individual existence, it obscures beforehand the results to which speculation may lead it.

In a philosophical point of view, Christianity, that men pretend to call overpassed and obsolete, is greatly in advance of the age; and it will always be so, for it is the first and last philosophy.

In the appreciation and in the history of religious events we must at least accept the religious element as a fact, as a phenomenon of the human mind, as a part of human nature, as deep, at all events, as all its other properties and other tendencies—nay, deeper than all others; for what is religion if not the search or the knowledge of a first principle; not an abstract one such as satisfies philosophy, but one living, personal, related to all the faculties of our being at once, and the necessity of which must be far more universally and keenly felt than that of the abstract principle? This last, in fact, only interests philosophers; the former interests the whole world, philosophers

included; and they must needs allow that the discovery of such a first principle, and of the means of entering into relations therewith, constitutes, if it be possible, a far more complete philosophy than theirs. We cannot, then, forgive them, when they relate a religious event, for insisting with all their might upon some hidden cause more profound than the religious sentiment itself, and only seeing in that religious want the form of some other want, or the accident of some phenomenon still more important and real. Because men, gradually emptied out, as it were, by the habit of speculation, may come at last to feel no want of God, they would be very wrong to imagine that others feel none; on the contrary, let them acknowledge that this want is the most constant, most universal, and most unextinguishable that human nature possesses, and that in every history in which religion appears, if it be not the only, it is the first that we must assume.

Without having the least inclination, or experiencing the least necessity to depreciate philosophy, we hold that the noble flights it has taken, the beautiful developments it has received, should not lead us to overlook so many errors, so many uncertainties, so much anguish, of which the traces and the testimony are to be found in that very chosen band, of whose works philosophy loves to compose the trophy of human reason. Such enormous discrepancies weigh in the balance; and we may confess, without incurring the reproach of pyrrhonism, that

not only "in order to present to the human mind an indispensable complement of truth," but to consecrate, to confirm the most elementary truths that philosophy had discovered, the Incarnation, and all connected with it, was of absolute necessity.

Philosophers themselves are men; and if philosophy had conquered in them all evil personality, it would have left nothing more for religion to do, unless religion be a solemn amusement of the imagination and the heart.

We must not condemn philosophy, or else we must be silent about the religion which assumes it, leads to it, and would create it did it not exist. Accordingly, St. Paul has not condemned it; and when he warns his disciples against a "science falsely so called," he, by so doing, implies the existence of a true science. Now philosophy is a part of science, or rather the very science of science. How, besides, could he have condemned it without condemning himself, seeing he so frequently and happily makes use of it? We should in vain attempt to deny it; the writings of St. Paul, and those of St. John, are full of the highest philosophy; and, let us be well understood, we do not only mean to say full of sublime truth, but full of that philosophy that we have tried to characterise, which rises from appearances to reality, from the accident to the essence, from the particular to the general, from changing facts to immutable principles.

Philosophy has been much slandered, and I am

not going to defend it; but I shall venture to say that, in one sense, it has rendered service to the Gospel. In applying itself to penetrate into its interior, to study the relations of its parts, its intimate texture, its system, it has gradually made an example of that philosophy which, making abstraction of the nature of things, impresses the most arbitrary character on religion, and necessarily ends by attributing to faith a merit, that of bondage and voluntary blindness. We have lost nothing in understanding that which could be understood, that which was made to be so; for there is often no medium between misunderstanding and ignoring. A good number of those who did not believe have thereby gained faith; those who already believed have been happy to see how profound on all sides is that foundation of those hopes of which they had hitherto seen one side only. They had said with joy, "I know in Whom I have believed!" they now say, with no less joy and gratitude, "I know in what I believe!"

Let us observe, in a general way, that these too absolute attacks upon reason, far from serving the cause of religion, are extremely unfavourable to it.

The unbeliever is, above all, an unbeliever in himself; man, in order to believe in himself, must, first of all, believe in God; let God reveal Himself—that is to say, communicate Himself to us—scepticism and despair will absorb themselves in His breast;

the one point is to find God, who is the peace and the security of the intellect, no less than the peace and security of the heart. It is He who will teach us alike when to trust in our reason and when to distrust it.

Heterodox science has its own earnestness. If I denied earnestness to an absolutely unbelieving science, how, step by step, could I fail to extend this exclusion to all the intermediate shades between absolute incredulity and orthodoxy. And again I may, indeed, know what absolute incredulity is, for there is such a thing; but orthodoxy is always, and necessarily, relative, and there is but one way of defining it—which is to say, orthodoxy is what I believe and you do not.

2. *Rational character of Christianity—Rights and Limits of Reason—Necessity of Faith.*

The essential opposition pointed out between reason and faith is not a reality—they are two powers reigning in two distinct domains. Thus, those who will have it that Christianity is only faith, and those who insist on its being all reason, are equally mistaken; it is both—it occupies thought and feeling; it alternately submits itself to, and withdraws from examination; it has its obscurities and its light. The theologian is bound to prove that he is well informed; he ought to win for the Gospel the respect of reason, but he is

not bound to put the Gospel upon the level of reason.

Christianity, a Divine operation, is also a rational one, and rational precisely because Divine.

When the grace of God has opened a heart to the full comprehension of the evangelical mystery, that heart must end by finding the Gospel divinely reasonable; but previous to that moment when the man receives new eyes and a new being, I prefer that the Gospel be taken for folly rather than wisdom.

Wonderful, yet true: Christianity modified as the world likes it is less comprehensible, for it is actually absurd, and yet it appears more clear. Complete Christianity is the only rational, the only logical, and yet this it is which appears incomprehensible.

Strange! When it is reasonable, Christianity is impotent; and like in this to one of the most wondrous creatures of the animated world, if it loses its sting it dies.

If Christianity be reasonable, it is with so high and unforeseen a reason, that human reason needs some time, some effort, and perhaps some grace from Heaven to rise to its tone. From the very first, and in all times, this sublime reason has passed for foolishness; and the especial folly in the eyes of the world and the wise of the world is to take these most reasonable doctrines seriously.

Human reason is competent to test the authenticity of a revelation; and if the task imposed on it

with regard to this seem above its strength, it is not reason that we have to quarrel with.

What we have denied, and still deny, is the competence of human reason, destitute of the help of revelation, to throw light on the great question of our destiny, and to re-establish unity in our inner life; it is its capacity of telling man what he wants to know about his soul, his true condition, and God; it is its power of laying "any other foundation than that is laid, Jesus Christ." Let these questions be discussed with us; let it be proved to us that reason can fill the post we affirm it cannot fill. Let reason be employed for this purpose, we on our side will employ it too; but do not let us be accused, at the very moment that we are reasoning, of hating reason, and while we are philosophising, of being enemies to philosophy.

The Christian excepts against reason when it pretends to engender or produce truth. He does in his sphere what the true philosopher equally does in his; for the latter admits, in virtue of and by the authority of an internal revelation, facts, for the discovery of which reason is of no avail. The philosopher has not got to demonstrate *à priori* the facts of this internal revelation—a revelation without antecedents, a principle *anterior* to all other principles. The theologian, for his part, recognises in revealed facts a principle *superior* to all other principles; he too does not prove these, for to prove would be to create them. By acting thus he does not deny reason; on the con-

trary, he makes use of it. And here we may observe that *reason*—that is to say, the nature of things—will always be for us whatever stand-point we assume, the criterion of truth, and the fulcrum of belief. It must always be the case that the truth without, measure and compare itself with the truth within us; with that intellectual conscience which, like the moral conscience, is clothed with sovereignty, pronounces sentences, knows remorse; with those irresistible axioms that we have within us, which form part of our nature, which are the support and, as it were, the ground of our thoughts—in a word, with *reason*. Every doctrine is in this sense bound to be reasonable; which does not, however, mean that every doctrine is bound to be accessible to reason. Nothing prevents reason from accepting what transcends it.

The field of religious ideas, when we traverse it in the footsteps of natural reason, is only the field of problems and contradictions. The farther we penetrate the greater the darkness, and we end by losing even those primitive notions, those instinctive beliefs we possessed before. This is the experience of all systems, all schools, and all ages. The history of philosophy teaches us that these researches, when we incautiously surrender ourselves to them, lead to terrible questions—to the very edge of the abyss. It is there, face to face with the infinite, that man sees realities dissolve, the most universal certainties vanish away, his very individuality become a problem. It is there that he sees the external world, and thought

itself, observation and observer, man and God, swallowed up from and lost to his terrified sight in the immensity of a horrible chaos. It is then that, seized with mysterious horror, he looks round with restless gaze for the world of finite beings and intelligible ideas, which he wishes he had never left. Thus his religion, made up of thought alone, proves to have neither enlightened, nor converted, nor consoled him; and he finds himself as far from the goal as he was before these laborious researches.

In the establishment of the relations of man with the Deity, *reason* may be regarded as the instrument of the religious sentiment; *conscience* is its seat.

Reason may conduct man from induction to induction up to the belief in a God; but it is conscience that receives this belief, and is amenable to its law. Reason adopts religious ideas; conscience is the seat of the religious sentiment.

Reason may and ought to guide us in the application of this sentiment, but is not this sentiment itself. It does not teach us what conscience teaches; and conscience on its side is unable to instruct us in what reason reveals.

To enlighten, to modify, to produce conviction, such is the office of reason. It belongs to conscience to make us act conformably to that conviction; the one is necessary to the other. Nothing in the world is more fatal than reason without conscience, or conscience without reason.

Nations, like individuals, cannot be modified, still

less regenerated, except by facts. Reason will not do as well as motives; syllogisms are inferior to examples, and in this region the true conviction is contagious. Instead of seeking, arms in hand, to establish the right of a fallen power, show that it is not abandoned; prove by its benefits that it deserved not to be so; bring forward actual witnesses of its dignity and excellence; be seen, in your own person, you alone standing beside its banner, pressing it lovingly in your hands, raising it above your head. . . . This, believe me, is the unanswerable argument; this is the earnest of victory; this is its beginning.

It may indeed be asserted that philosophy lacks no means of proving the necessity of all the duties imposed by evangelical morality. Nevertheless, to get these accepted and accomplished, the Supreme Master of men and their Divine Educator has had recourse to the power of facts. The Gospel itself is less a doctrine than a fact, and whenever we aim at reviving some moral convictions in the heart (I say in the heart, for elsewhere it is a theorem and nothing more), we shall need to conform to the example God himself has given. It is with morality as with motion—and with good right, since morality is to the soul what motion is to matter: the philosopher who best proved motion was he who, in the very height of the discussion, rose and began to walk.

Whosoever pretends to draw from reason and from nature the true and complete system of the relations of man with God; whosoever does not present religion

to us in a book that has emanated from God, deceives himself and us. Yes; religious truth must be found in a book, in the authentic archives of a revelation added to or substituted for the teaching of nature. We ought at least to listen to one who announces himself as the bearer of a book of God, whereas no trust is due to one who produces nothing of the kind: there is a reasonable prejudice in favour of the first; the second does not deserve a moment's audience. Why is this? Because the former comes within the terms of a probable supposition, and the latter sets out from a gratuitous assumption that nothing supports and that everything contradicts.

This is not a paradox, but a truth of common sense, and the contrary opinion rests on a mistake which it is easy to explain.

Nature seems to us to have a voice of her own; but it is not enough remembered that she would have none had not the Gospel spoken. She speaks to us through the Gospel, and we believe that she speaks to us directly. But what does she say—what has she ever said, to those that the Gospel has not converted, or at all events modified? What is she to such but a great enigma, or another name for inflexible necessity? What does she tell them regarding the character of God, His intentions, His will concerning man, His system of governing moral creatures? Nothing distinct, nothing conclusive, nothing that one can call a revelation. Men believe that the world creates us a heart to explain the world; they do not discern that

it is our heart which interprets this world to us, and that the nature of this interpretation depends on a quite other cause than the contemplation of sensible phenomena. In the midst of Christian influences they know not how to assign to these influences their proper part, to deduct it from the impression they imagine themselves receiving from nature alone, and reduce nature's part to its true value, which is *nil* if by this value we meant the capability of filling up the abyss hollowed out by evil, the power of constituting life, the supreme government of the will; in a word, that miraculous and yet necessary *equation* between our desires and our destiny.

What causes us to attribute to nature an extent and energy of teaching power of which she is incapable is, that we are not very fastidious about that teaching. We should be more so if it was made to include all the elements that we have just enumerated. It would then be very decidedly felt that God was not revealed; that He can only be so by some means, subsequent or superadded, in nature and reason—that is, by a book, a Bible; it would be acknowledged that the pure and rational notions that we had believed to owe to ourselves (first error), and had judged adequate to the wants of human life (an error equally great)—that these notions, unless they be closely attached to that revelation which is their stem, are but *effects*, never *causes*—have indeed *beauty*, but no *intrinsic virtue*. Alas! the most vulgar super-

stition has more, because even in its falsity it corresponds with a truth inherent in us—the necessity that God should speak, and the impossibility that He should not have spoken. For this is the hypothesis of the whole human race. Humanity expects the *Word*, throws itself on all that offers any appearance of it, spells and repeats it in the grossest imitations. Humanity demands a god-man, and an historical religion; humanity never was, never will be deistic.

Who then is in error? Is it humanity, or some few *beaux esprits*? Is not humanity cleverer than all clever men put together?

One would say that for some people the longer and less direct the way from the premiss to the conclusion, the more conviction loses its plenitude; as though it fatigued itself in those windings, and arrived exhausted at the issue of the argument. Often at the end of the most logical deductions an obstinate doubt will intrude—a singular sort of doubt, bringing forward no proof, not seeking to justify itself, but for all that, throwing a cloud over the most carefully acquired convictions. And when it does not spring from within, it springs from without. Diffused in the crowd that surrounds us, it assails us with the mass of all foreign incredulities. No one knows how hard it is to believe in the midst of an unbelieving multitude. Here it is that a noble exercise is open to faith, and here that its grandeur appears. This faith in contested truths, when it is calm, patient

and modest, is one of the essential attributes of all the men who have been "great in the order of mind."

There is one thing that is too much forgotten, namely, that faith in the Gospel implies little faith in the teachings of pure reason.

The Gospel does not offer itself as a brighter light added to our natural light, but as a torch to dissipate our darkness, as the day succeeding to the night. It does not merely imply ; it declares that all were out of the way, that there was not one wise ; no, not one. No one believes in the Gospel without believing that, before the Gospel, humanity was in the dark, and in a dark so much the more dangerous that it was here and there traversed by lightning flashes, which encouraged man to set out on his perilous way, whereas a more profound and impenetrable night would have constrained him to immobility, and kept him from nearing the abyss. There is this remarkable fact which we must not overlook. The Gospel, by its light, exercises a retroactive virtue over our past darknesses ; it makes them visible to us. He who, before he was a Christian, believed himself sure of many things, learns thenceforth how little worth the, as it were, gratuitous and anticipated certitude he had ; he becomes a sceptic retrospectively, not in the present, but in the past, which is yet another way of paying off arrears.

We may believe more or less well according as we understand more or less well. This looks like a bold

paradox, but its explanation is easy. In religion, as in everything else, it is absurd to pretend to understand everything. As we proceed from cause to cause, the moment must come when we shall have to say, This is, because it is. If we are only to be satisfied upon the condition of understanding everything, it is plain that we shall not believe. Now, not to believe is not to know; we must, then, *believe* in order to understand; but this being well understood, we add, that we must understand in order to believe well. If under the name of faith you mean a principle that renews the soul, faith must be a comprehension; that is to say, a reciprocal penetration of the subject and object. The Gospel invites us to contemplate truth; but wherefore, except that we may understand it? There are in religious truth hidden things that pertain to God, but also things revealed, which are our share. Although the Lord's ways be not our ways, there are things that we do not really believe unless we understand them. In every case, to fortify our faith, we must apply ourselves to understand. It is not enough to have reached the extremity of truth with the extremity of our finger; we must embrace it, enfold it in our arms, and clasp our two hands beyond it in adoration.

The ideas of Christianity are **not** Christianity; and we must here observe, that if from *real living Christianity* we almost unwittingly descend to the ideas of which its system is composed, we must needs re-

mount as naturally from these ideas to the life which is its essence.

The Gospel, like all other facts, may furnish materials for a science; but before being a science it is a fact; it is an action of God; and it is less important to explain than to experience this action.

Our soul does not discover but recognise truth: thus it judges upon evidence that a juncture impossible to chance, impossible to calculation, must be the work and secret of God, and then only it is that we really believe. Let us recapitulate: the Gospel is believed when it has passed for us from the rank of an external truth to that of an internal, and if I may so say, of an instinct; when we hardly find it possible to distinguish its revelations from the revelations of our consciousness; when it has become in us a fact of our consciousness. And these characteristics are so far from giving it the least leaning to fanaticism, that it is these characteristics, on the contrary, that distinguish and secure it therefrom. Fanaticism is a perfect stranger to this excellent logic of faith; it cannot allege, either to itself or to others, any of this intimate experience, that unexceptionable verification of facts by facts. The fanatic is blind; he believes because he does not see: the Christian believes because he has seen.

If the certitude of faith—if the right to be a Christian, depended upon knowledge and intelligence; if we were Christians only in so far as we

were in a condition to answer all the objections that science might create or intelligence formularise, there would be very few Christians indeed; nay, strictly speaking, there would be neither Christians nor Christianity.

A Christian may say to himself, that with more information than it has been possible to him to acquire, a certain objection that now seems to him perplexing would have seemed frivolous. He may say to himself, "I shall probably be troubled by an objection that is at bottom groundless, at which a clever person would laugh, which never would have been proposed to one less ignorant than I. Is it just that I should let myself be overthrown by a phantom, and that I should stake my peace, my strength, my spiritual life, against an adversary who on his side risks nothing, and knows his game perfectly?" No, no: but I hasten to add that there must be here neither idleness nor cowardice. We may only refuse one mode of combat to accept another. He who retreats before one enemy must confront another. He has to justify himself from this apparent want of courage. He must put himself into a condition to oppose internal evidence to external objections. In default of his words his life must become a refutation of heresy, so that heresy, contemplating his conduct, may begin to doubt itself, and to question whether that same Jesus Christ, from whom this man evidently receives grace for grace, may not indeed possess that glorious fullness that hitherto it had refused him.

In morality and in religion both, the certainty of truth is far more important than the refutation of error.

Christian certainty is something different to intellectual certainty. Doubt is a state of nothingness, a state of temptation through which we have all passed! When the life grows feeble, the faith is feeble. Faith creates the life, but the life supports the faith. Faith is light; when it is not this it sinks to the rank of mere belief.

Philosophy awakens no principle of life and renovation in the people: faith alone has this privilege; it is by faith, human or Divine, that a people lives and moves.

Prejudice in the world, and in philosophy party spirit, in vain resemble faith; faith possesses its object, touches, feels, tastes it, becomes united with it; but neither authority nor syllogisms will give us, with regard to those truths of which the soul is the judge, a certainty immovable by the assaults of reasoning. Even the best reasoning can only produce evidence with the concurrence of the soul, and we have seen doubts rise a thousand times, hideous and sarcastic, at the term of a deduction of which the diamond links formed the most perfect chain. That massive tower that you had seen on the horizon was only a cloud.

3. *Agreement of Ideal Philosophy and Ideal Christianity—Dangers of Speculation.*

In spiritual matters, the philosophical and the religious spirit assist each other to penetrate to the root of subjects : *interiora rerum*.

The knowledge of spiritual things ought to be something analogous to the reunion of all the senses : sight, touch, nothing should be wanting. Since the fall, *to know* has no longer been synonymous with *to see* ; *seeing* has appeared the more excellent, and men have come to saying that we can only know God on condition of seeing Him.

Happy the man who receives truth by all his faculties at once ! for whom it is at one and the same time the solution of the problems of the mind ; the quenching of the heart's thirst ; the accomplishment of the vast hopes of imagination ; lastly, the quieting of a troubled conscience. It is the whole man who is sick ; it is to the whole man, to all his wants, that the Divine source of redemption addresses itself. And perhaps certain systems, excellent and pure in intention, have too much neglected (or should I say despised ?) those sides of human nature, the cure, the restoration, the regular development of which enter into the idea and the conditions of the regeneration of the moral being. And yet men have been perfectly right in giving the rectification of the moral sense for fulcrum to this general renewal. Nothing is more logical and more effective. Love, the crown of the

work, could not initiate it. It could not be at once end and means. How should we offer to God what we do not possess?

If knowledge be vain without the affection it is destined to produce, affection is imperfect, carnal, mixed with impure elements, without the knowledge destined to give it its proper character. Individual Christianity is the development in the heart and life of certain ideas and certain facts that, in the Gospel, have nothing vague or equivocal about them. There is no uncertainty in the thoughts of God; there can be none in their expression, especially when that expression is that of the truth that saves us. Too much care could not be taken to preserve the ideas to which God has entrusted our regeneration from all that might have rendered their bearing indefinite or their conclusions problematical. Nothing in the Word of God is obscure in itself; nothing is so save by the fact of our nature: but the truths by which we are to be regenerated and saved everywhere appear definite and distinct. Thus the religious task imposed upon us is not to render more clear any of the fundamental dogmas of the Gospel; this would be to hold a candle to the sun; we are only bound not to darken them: and be sure that in this sphere whatever is obscure becomes so by our own fault, whether we have wished to add our thought to that of God (as is especially the case with Protestant rationalism), or whether we have failed to give sufficient attention to the truths of His

Word to obtain exact knowledge (as is very common in the catholicism of the multitude).

Whatever man may do in other respects, whatever he may pretend to, he cannot prevent his life ruling and measuring itself according to his knowledge or his ignorance of eternal things. Visibly or invisibly, positively or negatively, he refers everything thereto. Of necessity he must have principles. According to what God is or is not, and according to what God may be, so man will be this or that. Such as his belief is, such is he.

Although we are incapable of inventing the truth, there is within us something capable of recognising it, uniting itself thereto, becoming incorporated with it. If the re-establishment of a perfect harmony between our faculties, of the whole man with himself and with life—if this sentiment of plenitude and continuity be an illusion, where is truth? There is just as good reason to accuse of deception those native and universal beliefs to which M. de Laménais would reduce religion. These are evident neither on better authority nor in a fuller degree.

In matters of religion, it has been said, we must either not make any use of reason—which is impossible, or, to the last, refer ourselves to its authority—which contradicts the idea of a revealed religion. The alternative is hard, and the dilemma would be unavoidable if it related to one and the same use of reason. Assuming man to be fallen, it does not belong to him to invent a method of restoration ;

his very fall implies the impossibility of this ; but this method once revealed, why should he not be in a condition to appreciate, on one hand, the adaptation of the means to the end, and, on the other, the compatibility of this method with the laws of that reason with which he must needs compare all, though it cannot measure all. If the author (Lamenais) did not believe in the reality and certainty of this criterion, he could not bring it forward.

But since he admits it as revelation, he must, at all events, allow it as a criterion ; and therefore let us be permitted to employ it, in order to learn whether this religion, which knows more than reason, has anything contrary to reason ; by which word we do not only mean the first logical principles, from which all, even the most divergent minds, set out, but also those first data of morality without which a man is not a man, but a brute. If I had every sense except that of sight, and God were to bestow on me that additional faculty, it would be no benefit, but a bitter mockery, and consequently I could not believe Him the source of it ; if my fingers found angular or pointed what my eyes announced as smooth or rounded ; or, to speak in more general terms, if the testimony of one sense did not agree with that of another.

If my eyes only serve to deceive me, I shall keep them shut, or confine myself to darkness. Now revelation is to reason what sight is to touch, or touch to sight.

Lamenais had very possibly met Christians who said, "Believe that God has spoken, and do not examine—or rather, do not appreciate in any way—what He has said." But this opinion is but an opinion. We, for our part, say that it is impossible to find in a religion that comes from God, anything repugnant to the first principles of reason; and we equally say that, if we did meet, in a religion professing to be Divine, with anything of the kind, we should be led not to believe it Divine, for the principles that such things contradict are more evident than any of the historical proofs on which religion rests; and further, as this religion insists on being believed with the heart, as it requires the adhesion of the whole man, as without that it would not really be a religion, it is impossible that it should say the contrary of what our conscience says, and that it should, at the same time, exercise over us that regenerating power which is the seal of a Divine religion. An appeal to my admiration is also an appeal to my judgment; and he who consents to admire by so doing consents to judge. It is not in every sense that "God's ways are not as our ways, and His thoughts as our thoughts." We could neither admire nor even *discern* the justice of God had it nothing in common with our justice, nor His goodness had it nothing in common with our goodness. To say that God is perfectly just and good is to say that He perfectly realises the idea that we form to ourselves of justice and

goodness. It may be that a veil covers, at certain points, that goodness and justice: "God is in heaven, and we are on earth." But it is what we do see that enables us to judge of what we do not see.

If there be invincible obscurities, these are not peculiar to Christianity; they are found identically in deism; and to avoid them, we must either penetrate before the time into the inaccessible light of heaven, or draw back as far as atheism, where particular obscurities disappear in the general darkness.

Some ask their own intellect for information about God, forgetting that we can only see God by God's own light, just as we can only see the sun by the sun. To see God, the intellect should be full of God, imbued and penetrated with God. With such an interior eye it would see God; but without it, it cannot, however penetrating it may be, know or find God. Yet nevertheless, such is its presumption, that it wants to know respecting God not merely what can be known, but also what cannot. Here the limit is laid down by the Scriptures, which declare to philosophers and Christians, "That which may be known of God is manifest in them" (Rom. i. 19). There does, then, exist that of God *which cannot* be known; but this the pride of reason will not acknowledge—it forgets that, beyond the light, there is night and the abyss.

Is it then, in general, a sin to desire to know? Not so; but it is a sin to crave to know what God

has commanded us to ignore. Even did the means of knowledge exist, we ought not to avail ourselves of them, if forbidden by God. Where the means are wanting, the wish seems to be only simple folly; but it is something more. There is in the very desire a principle of insubordination and discontent, which cannot be innocent. To mistake our limits is not always a simple error; it is only pride that can lead us to mistake certain limits. And the more unreasonable, the more insane the mistake, the more it betrays our pride, which alone can mislead our reason to such an extent. Now these limits may be defined in a word. If God has given up the world to men's discussions, He has never intended to give Himself up to these; there is an abyss between these two knowledges, as between us and God: "that which may be known of God" (Rom. i. 19), as the apostle expresses it, has been manifested to us by God himself in His works, in which "His eternal power and glory do appear" (Rom. i. 20); but to know what God is, we must be God, and to desire that which appertains only to God is to make ourselves God.

If a superhuman knowledge of God had been essential to guarantee to you the certainty of all your other knowledge, God would have given it you, and it would have ceased to be superhuman, or rather it would never have been so. You feel, indeed, at bottom, that what conscience and religion teach you respecting God is perfectly sufficient to the end

you allege, and that life and science organise themselves very well around this notion; yet this notion is imperfect according to you. Yes; because you want to know God as God knows Himself: but if you only lay claim to a human knowledge of God, you have a knowledge perfect in its kind; and in this respect you have neither to complain of nature nor of religion.

Between speculation or pure thought, and goodness, there is a whole abyss, and it is not thought that will ever fill it up.

Pure abstraction—I mean thought without feeling—does not lead to truth, and the entire absence of all bias that it affects involves a false position.

We may, without any danger to truth, make abstraction of material interests,—they need not enter into the account at all; but it is impossible to do the same with moral interests. On the contrary, this prepossession is essential to the research of truth. It is not permitted us to be indifferent here.

The habit of abstraction hardens, brutalises. There is more true enthusiasm in those who are in a hurry to conclude.

Thought for thought's sake is nothing better than art for art's sake.

The force of an individual and of a nation; lies not in being free from prepossessions, but rather in having them. We must be partial to something or other.

The evil consists not in being interested, but in being so in what does not deserve our interest.

It is important to remark that, unlike other religions, the Gospel only admits the speculative element under the title of support and auxiliary to the practical. Not only, as you may easily conceive, is no dogma passive, but the exposition of the dogma stops short precisely, I might say abruptly, at the point where the practical, thoroughly satisfied, would have nothing to gain from any ulterior development.

It may be that a perfectly connected, because perfectly true religion, has delighted some minds like a perfect syllogism; it may be that the complacency felt at being able to reason out one's religion has led to a little too much reasoning; it may be that we have too much tried to draw it, body and soul, out of the abstraction of dialectics, and that, the effect adapting itself to the cause, we have procured a certain number of conversions rather intellectual than moral. It may even be that we have attempted to perfect the Divine logic; that to cut out a smoother and more direct path for Christian reasoning, we have suppressed, at all events by our silence, certain inspired passages (and, consequently, certain truths) that God had set as a snare to the pride of logicians; it may be, in short, that a little of the rationalism so vehemently attacked by the orthodox may be one of the characteristics of our modern orthodoxy. But this abuse, of which we must not underrate the importance, is very far from counterbalancing in our preaching the

incontestable merit of a more systematic teaching—a merit of which the practical consequences should make us feel the value.

Philosophy and lofty sentiments have less connection than is often supposed with Divine truth; and it is not by dint of human wisdom that we rise to understand the wisdom of God.

You must keep your heart in safety; you must reserve within you certain principles that no discussion has the right to infringe or even to agitate. Whatever may happen as to the rest, and whatever the issue of the discussion, so much remains irrevocably acquired by your conscience: God is God; I must live for Him; love Him above everything; do His will, His whole will, and nothing but His will. You have arrived at these convictions by the very road that some pretend you ought not to have taken; these convictions have struck their root in the very mystery that you are obliged to discuss. This is of absolutely no consequence: they are true in themselves; they are henceforth evident to you; the diminution or destruction of the mystery of your faith would, no doubt, do them mortal injury by uprooting them from your heart; but they can no longer be uprooted from your mind: after all, before all, they are truths. You know this. Well then, say to yourselves: After, as before, all discussion, this is true, this is necessary; all that contradicts or weakens it is necessarily false; I shall accept nothing except these immutable truths; if they are not a touch-

stone to discover truth, they will serve as a touchstone to reveal error.

Let us mutually warn each other of the danger of turning into speculation what has been given us to live on ; and of, so to speak, pillaging truth to benefit our curiosity. Let us admire, indeed, but let us also render thanks ; admire, but humble ourselves ; admire, but ask above all knowledge, for the love that edifies. But let us never weary of saying to ourselves, and proclaiming to others, that the Gospel is divinely reasonable ; that it is wisdom amongst the perfect, and adapted alike to give wisdom to the simple and simplicity to the wise.

The intellect only enables us to appropriate the idea of things, not their impressions, their reality. And if it suffices in science, properly so called, which has for its object only the ideas of things and their logical fitness, it does not suffice in the sphere of those facts whose object is to enter into immediate contact with the living forces of the soul, and which, without that contact, would lose their character and even the reason of their existence. No doubt, in this sort of knowledge, as in every other, the understanding has functions to fill ; but truth does not stop short at the mirror the understanding presents, it passes through it to reflect itself in the innermost mirror of the soul ; and we may say of truths of this order, that they are only perceived, only understood, inasmuch as they make themselves felt in that part of ourselves which is the seat of

our affections, and consequently the true centre of our life.

If religion be something more than a science, if it be life flowing from a fact, it is clear that it does not appeal to the mind alone, and that whoever only sees in it the mass of ideas that it contains, remains outside of the truth. Or even if he gave all possible attention to each of these ideas, to their mutual relations, to their totality—even if he daily made some new discovery in that domain, all this would not advance him a single step towards truth; what he had learnt might, indeed, be exactly *true*, but it would not be *the truth*.

It is very evident that in itself reasoning does not lead to feeling; and when thought is too much preoccupied with the idea of a fact, the idea is retained and the fact escapes. It is the same as with a man prevented by the sun's light from seeing the sun. In vain the number and beauty of the ideas connected with Christianity; this very beauty and number become a snare that prevents our advancing beyond, and the interest of curiosity prevails over all others. In vain do these ideas come so near to truth that they seem its very substance: this new snare is more dangerous than the first; were they farther removed, were they even quite foreign to the truth, this illusion would not be possible; and hence we have had occasion to observe that the occupations most unconnected with Christian speculation, provided they do not oppose Christian morality, are less likely to distract the soul from

what should be its first object here below. It is often far better, as regards the religious life of the heart, to be a merchant, an artist, a geometrician, than a theologian.

The exclusive application of the intellect to religion not only fails to bring us nearer to the truth,—that is, to the life,—but it actually tends to remove us farther and farther from it.

The habits of thought are not less tyrannical than others, and a time comes when change is impossible even to the strongest will. Let us trace the moral history of a man given up to the tendency we have described. Earnestness of spirit certainly failed not to accompany his earliest steps; it is scarcely possible to suppose that from the very first he only saw in religion an object of philosophical speculation. His first intention, no doubt, was to appropriate it to his own soul, and submit to it his life, but this impression was superficial and fugitive; thought, thoroughly fascinated, threw itself upon this rich booty, and turned it entirely to its own account. This inclination became dominant and tyrannical; everything that was destined to be the aliment of the soul became the feast of the intellect. Each gain of the mind was a loss to the soul, which, more and more out of court, more and more condemned to inaction, lost its elasticity by want of use. The man having contracted the habit of seizing hold of all things by their intellectual side, gradually grew incapable of grasping them under any other aspect. Singular fact! he went on learning ever better

and better how to give account of the effects of truth upon the soul, and became ever more and more incapable of experiencing these effects himself; he spoke, he wrote perhaps on the *order of grace*, and his heart grew more and more hardened against the influence of grace; in all his religious considerations, the idea of the thing, presenting itself before the thing, interposed as an obstacle between the fact and him; ere long he had nothing of all these facts but their phantoms, which faithfully represented their form and colour, but did not contain their substance. He felt this, and grew uneasy; he determined to make religion, so long his study, at last a business, and *his* business; he sought to place himself under the action of truth, and in a state of dependence upon it, but by force of habit his mind always came to substitute itself for his conscience; seeking vainly for a religion in this system he could only find a system in this religion. In his anguish he would fain have forgotten, have ignored; he envied the credulity of the simple, of children; he would have given all his science for a single sigh of theirs, and all his intellect in exchange for their hearts, for his had ceased to beat, his had become mind. He would have wished the whole of Christianity to be blotted from his memory, the very existence of religion to become unknown to him, so that, presenting itself to him anew, it should act upon his soul, made young once more, with all the energy of a new truth and an unexpected blessing. Fruitless wishes: one cannot regain the eye one has lost, nor

recover the faith which is the eye of the soul. Strange condition, in which one both believes and believes not; in which the faith of the mind helps one to feel the necessity of the faith of the heart; makes us bemoan its absence, yet cannot bestow it: state of light, indeed, but of a light which does nothing but make our darkness visible; ignorance in science, error in truth, unbelief in faith, malediction under the form of a blessing; contradictory, insane state, for which we should reproach the Divine Power as for a cruel mockery, if indisputable evidence did not constrain us to impute it to our own selves!

II.—CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

The system of Christianity, that is to say, the relation of its facts with each other, and of all of them together to one common fundamental idea, to one single end; the comparison of this religion with human nature, on which, if we may so speak, God has taken its measure and traced its plan; the alternate explanation of Christianity by nature, and nature by Christianity; the definition of the Christian spirit, and its application to the details of life; the comparison of this system with all other systems, each of which, unable to hold or to give account of every fact, left some large deficiency that Jesus Christ has filled up, some immense difficulty that He has blotted out; in a word, the reconciliation by Christianity, and by it alone, of all the contradictions, all the distracting dualities of which life and our very nature seem formed,—here

is enough to give you an idea, though a very feeble one, of the infinite speculations in which the study of Christian philosophy may involve an observing and meditative mind.

Christianity, which denies the sufficiency of philosophy in these matters (of theodicy), has not been able, in bringing forward a solution, to take the attitude of philosophy; has not untied, it cut the knot: but the knot was living, and it has bled.

Philosophy in religion is an instrument, a method; we have not got to do so much with a given philosophy, a philosophical construction, as with the philosophic spirit, by means of which we class, generalise, abstract, find out the true relations of things; remount from appearances to reality, from phenomena to principles; embrace the whole. This spirit helps us to discover the philosophy of religion, that is to say, the relation to each other and to the centre of the elements that compose it, and its relation with the world and with life. It is by the aid of this spirit that we grasp and point out the secret harmony that exists between all things; between religion and nature or human life; and in human life between individual and social existence; between art and reality; between thought and action, liberty and order; between particular affections and general; between instincts and duties; between the interest of the present and the thought of the future. Here philosophy appears not as an object, but an instrument.

When we speak of the philosophy of Christianity, we seem to speak of something extraordinary, remote, accessible to few minds ; and yet to say that Christianity is philosophical is but to say, in other words, that it is consistent with itself and with our nature ; that it is human, simple, logical, practical. Thus we cannot better bring into relief the philosophy of the Gospel, nor enter better into the spirit of the times, nor better serve the cause of the religious movement, than by causing the morality that abounds in the Gospel itself to abound in our preaching. The Christian pulpit has in this respect a position to regain, and till this is done the preacher does not know what may be its authority and power in an epoch like ours.

The speculative philosophy of Christianity is the study of the speculative ideas of which Christianity is the expression. It teaches the principles to which, in the human mind, Christianity attaches itself.

Practical philosophy shows to what consistency of life Christianity leads.

The first is analytical or retrogressive ; it goes back to principles. The second is synthetical and progressive. With regard to the former, Christianity is the term ; with regard to the latter, the starting point. Practical philosophy is not *morality* ; morality traces duty, practical philosophy gives us the fact. The one is a code, the other a history.

Christianity, in many of its elements, is capable of assimilating itself to the manners of any people what-

soever. Up to a certain point it may become popular. Some of its principles have, in their concurrence with the interests of humanity, an evidence resembling that of those interests themselves. There are Christian instincts in the world as it is; were we to look very closely, we should find evangelical traditions at their basis, but they are none the less instincts, so closely are they assimilated to our being. We have many of this kind. There have been ages and nations that did not believe what we imagine must always have been believed. Worldly evidence ends by attaching itself to things acquired.

If it be useful to the man of the world to discover by comparison the falsehood and the incompleteness of his actual representations, it is not useless to the man of the Gospel to recognise what of just and true existed in those very representations that formerly were his; and the triumph of Christian philosophy hardly consists more in revealing to us the error of our former judgments than in showing what it is that reunites our two epochs and continues the former in the latter, or makes the latter remount to the former. It is well to show what, under the influence of grace, as under the action of a Divine graft, becomes of those forces that grace does not destroy, those wants that she does not deny.

CHAPTER II.

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.

I.—TRUTH.

1. *Its Destiny on Earth; Truth, position, and force.*

RELIGIOUS truth, and all truth, indeed, resembles a vast building in which during many years one single story is occupied; the proprietor, who has but recently entered upon it, living there alone. But he will have a son who, when he is grown up, will settle down in his turn, and occupy the second story; that son will also have a son, in whose favour he will by-and-bye dispose of the third story; and then the whole large house will be found open, inhabited, animated. During a long period, however, you might go and knock in vain at the third or even the second story; no one would answer you, the door would open only on the ground-floor. Thus there are different stories or stages of truth: the most general form the ground floor; in the others, when the time is come, lodge more special truths; till then, if you wish to see anything of these, you must apply at the ground-floor, where they dwell with their parents, around one same hearth, blended in one family

circle, not having as yet set up house for themselves. It is thus that the reprobation of slavery, or the doctrine of personal freedom, remains for a season implicated in some more general truth, from which, with the help of time, it will disentangle itself. It is thus that the mutual independence of Church and State, nowhere explicitly taught, is everywhere taught implicitly, because it springs from another more abstract, more profound, and, if you will, more theological truth. The whole question is to know whether an honest logic, a loyal spirit of consistency, will or will not deduce it.

Truth is not unknown, is not a stranger; each one knows her by sight, each one preserves some memory of her. No one, indeed, has lived in intimacy with her, but on each she has let fall a look that penetrates to the soul; and this tender, piercing, melancholy look, this luminous look, which is a ray, accompanies us, pursues us, and casts a faithful light athwart our darkness. Each age, each man has received from her, in this profound glance, some utterance that he recalls and repeats; nowhere complete, nowhere established, she has stamped her impress everywhere; in all institutions, all prejudices, in the most different customs, there is something of her still; the human race, society, live only on her memory; it is the salt that preserves them from entire dissolution. And yet to see how men receive her as she goes on reclaiming some new fragment of her inheritance, would one guess that she had a sort of foothold among them, and that they

have more or less given her wages? "She came unto her own, and her own received her not."

We know the precise day when He who is the truth, the whole truth, ascended Calvary to shed His blood there; but for ages past, partial truth, sometimes under the form of a principle, sometimes already personified in a man, has been climbing with laborious but even steps, its own mysterious Calvary.

Truth is a suppliant which, standing on the threshold, constantly struggles towards the hearth whence sin has banished her. As we pass and repass by that door that she never leaves, her sad and imposing form fixes for a moment our careless gaze. Each time it awakes in our memory I know not what vague recollection of order, glory, happiness; but we pass on, and the image gets effaced. We have never been able entirely to repudiate truth; we retain some unconnected fragments of her; just as much light as our enfeebled vision can bear; just what is proportioned to us: for the rest, we reject it, or we disfigure it till it is no longer recognisable, keeping however (and this is one of our misfortunes) the names of things we no longer possess. Truth, moral and social, resembles one of those tombstone inscriptions, over which everybody passes on their way, and which goes on getting daily more and more effaced, till some friendly chisel comes to deepen its letters in the worn-out stone, so that all the world is obliged to observe and read it. This chisel is in the hands of a small number of men, who keep obstinately bent

over the ancient inscription, at the risk of being pushed over and trampled down on the marble by the inattentive feet of the passers-by ; that is to say, this truth fallen into oblivion, this duty become obsolete, finds a witness in the person of some man who has not been contented to believe, without further examination, that all the world was right merely because it was all the world.

Evil cannot justify evil ; the true, the right, have no conditions ; it is always time to return to them, and we must return without looking to right or left ; we must return upon the faith of God, who can have attached none but happy consequences to a true principle, and who cannot fail to be our guarantee.

Every true principle knows very well where to locate itself. Up to the decisive moment it may seem to float in the void, to be nowhere and everywhere. But the right time comes ; it incarnates itself, becomes man, and you find that while you believed you were only dealing with formulæ, you were attacking and piercing hearts.

It is no such slight matter to wound truth. These wounds do not kill ; they cause to live. Truth only assumes a life external to its own, a place in the world, a rank in history, at this price ; but by paying this price she obtains all these. How beautiful she is when threatened ! How she gathers around her unknown lovers, and suddenly raised up champions ! It is at the moment that men seek to snatch her away from us that we feel, it may be for the

first time, by what deep roots she clings to our hearts.

An absolute principle can neither be satisfied nor violated by halves; we may not accept evil and exclude its effects. The utmost we can do is to colour the poisoned fruit; there is no possible way of correcting its bitter and pernicious juices.

A principle being once acknowledged, we cannot beforehand measure out its way and count its steps, tell out its whole rights and exigencies, and only concede a proportionate part of them. A known right is a conquered right. We may only tell half the truth; but that half, when it has been told, will not submit to be only half realised.

Truth, the mind's true country, can never be abjured, or even silently disavowed, with advantage to any position.

Truth exists; it has its reason in itself; it presents itself as an end accessible, and worthy to be pursued; it broods over life; demands to enter into it, not by its effects, but in its own person; not by reaction and, as it were, accident, but directly; not for the love of its temporal results, but for itself; not as means, but as an end; not only into the life, but, above all, into the heart.

There is no essential relation, no natural affinity, between truth and force. This is so true that I can find in nature no term of comparison that will help me to illustrate the idea. Fire and water are more alike than truth and force. Contraries even have

more of mutual relation, for the one informs us of the other's absence; but between force and truth I see no point of contact, no connection whatever; the one never suggests, or implies, or replaces the other. Force may coincide with truth, truth with force; but this union is only accidental, and we are bound to confess that it is rare. The result is, that when we insist on giving force for a support to truth, we make them as it were contract an adulterous marriage, which turns to the dishonour of both. The honour of truth is to triumph by its own energy; the honour of authority is to understand this principle, to leave a free path to truth, to have faith in its power, and consequently never to offer, or rather impose upon it, the deteriorating assistance of material force.

The history of all ages affords a peremptory contradiction to those who imagine that ideas can be killed. Persecution is a grafting. *Inutiles amputans falce ramos, feliciores inserit.* This Latin means, that persecution recruits for the enemy.

We may affirm that an idea remains powerful so long as it has not been refuted; and there is for it only one mode of death, namely, succumbing to the efforts of reason. We have instances of ideas having perished beneath the stroke of a rigorous demonstration. Those ideas will never reappear. But such as have been attacked by external force alone retain all their life, even if contradiction have not communicated to them a new degree of energy.

On all sides thought escapes; the narrowest egress

suffices it, the least success leads it to all triumphs. It only asks the intercourse of man with man; it finds in the most limited relations a fulcrum powerful enough to lift a world; it works against force; it only yields to itself; only submits to truth.

If there be any idea consecrated by experience it is that of the force of repulsion, and of, so to speak, that elasticity of the human mind which constrains it to revolt against all attempts at compression. Contested in all times by frivolous minds, it has in all times derived a new force from the testimony of facts; and it is, if I may venture so to express myself, steeped in blood and tears, and surrounded by a train of sorrowful memories, that it presents itself to us from age to age; always too sure to be misunderstood, and always pertinacious in reappearing because it is the truth. The human mind is a free essence: liberty is its peculiar characteristic, is an indestructible element of its nature. It knows that it may abuse its liberty; but it also knows that it cannot live without it. To forbid, to dispute this, is to attack it in its very essence; it is to will the annihilation of its nature. It is of small consequence in its sight that such an attempt should have for its end the establishment of the truth. It refuses even to truth the right to establish itself at the cost of liberty. What do I say? It cannot recognise truth under the attributes of force; light thus offered confuses rather than illumines it; it confirms itself more and more in prejudices that the voice of per-

suasion and the intrinsic power of truth would have surely dispelled; it struggles like a maniac in chains that it would have voluntarily borne; it passes rapidly from assistance to hatred, and from enlightened zeal to blind fury.

Sophisms may seduce; reasons may convince: promises and threats have no power over thought. It can only be modified by itself; it recognises no superiority but its own; it resists all foreign force; it is by its nature constrained to be invincible; it would be easier for man to lose his self-consciousness than the want and the sentiment of his intellectual liberty. He may yield, bend, abjure his ideas, anathematise them, publicly dispute them; but thought is never the accomplice of apostasy; and when the sight of chains has forced Galileo to proclaim the immoveability of the earth, the rebel, thought, only cries so much the more vehemently within him, "*E pur si muove?*"

He whose thoughts were scattered by the tumult of the world, folds back upon himself, and grows concentrated so soon as that noise is over. Removed from the sight of the common actualities of life, deprived of that bridle that discussion would have put upon his impetuous spirits, alone with his imagination, he yields it up to gigantic thoughts; he delights to cherish vast and chimerical plans in his oppressed soul: if, in the course of his vague meditations, he reaches the truth, he soon goes beyond it; and, so much the more free as you believe him

enslaved, drawing a fresh intellectual audacity from the means that you have taken to repress his natural audacity, he is destined to prove to you that no constraint is competent to deprive the human mind of that liberty and activity that the power of the word has developed therein.

2. *Laws of the progress of Truth—Truth and Necessity—Logic and Fiction.*

When we submit the progress and action of truth on earth to laws, we reserve, as may well be supposed, the sovereignty of God, from whence truth emanates. God, the source of law—God, the law of laws, is Himself subject to no law. But just as in the government of the universe He develops from one first impulse, includes in one single act of will, all the most varied effects, all the infinite multitude of accidents and beings, all the junctures, the combinations, all the seeming chances which are to our human sight only a successive engendering of necessities, of which the first alone belongs to the Divine will; just as the first fact was big with an innumerable posterity of more particular facts, that God not only distinctly perceived, but particularly willed, so that it was for all these consequences that the first fact took place, and not these consequences for that fact,—so in the government of the moral world each fact, although springing from another fact, depends immediately on God, and each of the incidents of

each fact, each combination of one fact with another, each of the meetings that have occurred, and of the influences that exert themselves between moral individualities, is directly imputable to the will of the Sovereign Master of all. He wills every moment what happens every moment, though He has beforehand linked facts one with the other; though the infinity of phenomena and infinity of details of each of these are only the continual flow of one same thought, and though all that has been willed separately and for itself has been willed at once, as it has been thought at once, and viewed at a glance.

There is one sense in which truth knows no laws except its own, is never overcome, never retarded, and always triumphs. It always realises itself, either in the free submission of the moral being or in his chastisement. The believing and the unbelieving, the saints and the ungodly, equally do it honour. Error, which combats, affords it at the same time, at its own cost, a striking confirmation; it is its natural counter-proof.

The fall of heavy bodies is not subject to more rigorous laws than the course of the idea in the human mind and in society. A principle bears all its consequences within itself, as a plant does all its posterity. Men may choose the time to agitate a question; they may defer proposing it; but, once proposed, they cannot prevent the questions it contains proposing themselves one after the other. The

lawsuit grows by pleading ; the original causes disappear ; the primary subject of debate is forgotten ; men pass rapidly from the accessory to the principal, from the accident to the substance, from the *how* to the *why*. A question of servitude or of boundary will devour an ancient fortune ; and a whole existence, engaged in the perilous debate, is no longer to be found at its conclusion.

Truth and necessity only make one, and the logic of the ideas lay beforehand in the facts themselves. God has granted us no nobler spectacle than that of times when these two logics reunite. Nothing is so indefatigable, obstinate, and powerful, as a principle. It gradually brings all thoughts into captivity to its obedience ; and even before it has subjected thoughts, it has subjected facts. As everything is connected in a true system, as the whole truth is included in each particular truth, one point gained, the whole is gained.

If truth were, all of a sudden, to appear in the midst of our social organisation, the whole edifice, industriously constructed and cemented by falsehood, would crumble, would vanish in the twinkling of an eye ; but at the same moment, by the necessity of existing, society would rebuild its dwelling on new falsehoods at a new expense.

Strange situation ! we have need at once of truth and falsehood ! We only own one of these wants, but we seek to satisfy them both ; the one as the want of the life, the other as the necessity

of the moment. Looking at the social world, it seems as if with less truth, just as with less falsehood, it could not possibly subsist. A delicate blending of fiction and reality seems to be the first condition of all social organisation. This is because society aims at a perfect end with imperfect elements.

3. *Men and Truth*

Truth in the mind of man is like quicksilver in the hand. Hold it as tightly as you will, always, and without knowing how, you will find that some of it escapes you.

All that man can do is to deny the truth, he cannot destroy it, and most certainly he will not always deny it.

Each truth is at some distance from our mind; it needs time to reach us, and no one can fix its time; no one can trace out its way.

In one sense, whatever Fontenelle may have said, it is by the thick end that truth enters best, or rather that it enters at all.

Mystery and underhand proceedings never characterised the friends of truth.

Most of the friends of truth love it in the same way that Frederick the Great loved music. It used to be said of him that, properly speaking, he was not fond of music, but of the flute, and not indeed fond of the flute, but of his flute.

If it be right and necessary, when meaning well, to return often to the charge, we must each time return to it with new or newly polished weapons, with fresh arguments, or arguments presented under fresh aspects. One is not supposed to have said a true thing twice unless one has said it in two ways. Repetition without variety, either in point of view or expression, rather weakens than confirms.

The heart of man wants to attach itself, and can never attach itself to pure theories, nor even to interests. The truth which the people doubtless need, and which is not assuredly the nourishment of the philosopher alone, must be a tangible and, if possible, a personified truth. It must incarnate itself in order that they should recognise and adore it. You will never get the heart of man to love abstraction; and he will do nothing well unless he loves it.

The truth that we have diminished, revenges itself by diminishing us.

Great questions at the present day meet the fate of the early Christians; they are thrown to the beasts!

It is remarkable that the majority of minds which have given a strong impulse to human thought have been far from scientific. There is about them much that is abnormal and adventurous; they do not belong to troops of the line, they are partisans, guerrilla chieftains; but they are the men to employ

in making discoveries. On the other hand, we must allow that their discoveries are sometimes imaginary.

A good cause is often so ill defended that it tells in favour of a bad ; and the example of the learned has not always recommended learning.

New ideas which are not correct resemble fruits that rot before they ripen.

Under the name of love of truth we often find classified a mere ardent desire of knowledge, or a species of lofty curiosity. The love of truth is something different ; it may be found in minds that are little greedy of knowing, and tolerably content to ignore, but which the false revolts and the true delights. Pascal is at the head of noble minds like these. No doubt, he loved concrete truth, or truth of every order ; but his energy of thought might have weakened, never his love and his need of truth.

Although man has been in all times a liar, yet a marvellous providence forces him to introduce by degrees some measure of truth both into his institutions and his customs.

In the advance towards truth nine steps are the half of ten.

It is with truth as with *prayers* in Homer's sublime allegory. Just as prayers, lame as they were, could come up with swift-footed violence at the foot of Jupiter's throne, so in the world we live in, lame truth overcomes winged error ; for it is truth that limps, and error that has wings.

The regular march of mind does not exhaust all errors before it fixes itself in the truth.

He who only accepts truth as a legacy may indeed protest that he believes it, but most certainly he does not.

Absolute good, absolute truth, should be put before the gaze of humanity; we only draw near to them in proportion as we believe in and contemplate them; and faith in perfection is the same thing as faith in truth.

Faith in truth, I mean in the intrinsic value, the force of truth, is a rare virtue, a religious virtue; for it implies religion, and religion implies it. Nay, it is already almost a religion, since he who believes in truth believes in something more than space, time, and all the forces of the universe. Truth is the thought of God; it is God in the world.

The grandest of conceptions is the preference of truth above all things. I say truth, since for each of us our opinions or our conviction is the truth. This principle of conduct is the instinctive glory of Christian ages—to it modern history owes its principal characters and greatest interest; and for a long time past the general conscience does homage to the disinterestedness that ranks a thought higher than an empire.

Through varying fortunes, through evil repute and good repute, truth goes on her way without hurrying herself, or without loitering on the road. If she does not arrive, so much the worse for the world, not

for her. If she arrive late; this is because the condition of all truths of a moral order is to advance slowly.

The world, sooner or later, ranges itself with a thrill on the side of truth. The memory of witnesses for the truth always ends in being honoured. The madmen of the past are the sages of the future; if their name perishes, their testimony endures. And what more do they want? Does not their best part survive them?

The double marvel that we see in the world is, that though there are not indeed two opposite truths on the same subject, one for the heart and one for the mind, yet the very truth that the heart rejects enters in by way of the intellect, and the truth that the intellect rejects enters by the door of the heart. Thus necessity very often subserves, though with bad grace, the interests of truth.

Things come only in their own proper time, that is, after having been long wanting.

Neither facts alone (we may say this to our honour), nor principles alone (we must own this to our shame), suffice for the establishment of truth in this world; but by their mutual aid she gets a footing and takes root.

The human mind is indolent and fantastic. It is in no such hurry to multiply truth by itself, ideas by ideas. It lingers, muses by the side of a truth, then, stimulated by circumstances, it bounds and rushes on. Its two modes of motion are to crawl and to

leap. At least, this is its wont in the domain of speculative truth and moral interests. After long delays, it devours space, and the better to redeem lost time, it fails not to overleap itself and pass by the goal.

It is true that many different circumstances may throw sincere minds into extremes, and for some time the axis of truth will have but one pole for them; but if they are disinterested, never fear, the two elements, of which only one appears at present, are both alike safely preserved in their hearts.

All men who exclusively love one half of truth are of the same race in spite of the marked differences that may divide them. They are of the race of narrow hearts and narrow minds. Each of them is the enemy of his own cause, and the auxiliary of his enemy.

II.—HISTORY

1. *Its definition: Fatalism—History and historians—Symbolism—History, ancient and modern—Conditions favourable to historical writing—Signs of the times.*

History in its highest signification is but the manifestation of the idea of progress, whether we refer that progress to the nature of things and the course of time, or whether we seek it in what Bossuet calls *the development of religion*, or, lastly, whether we view it as a result of these two causes

combined. In all these cases, progress can only be the advance of the intelligent world towards *truth*, which exclusively and infallibly contains *goodness*. If the law of progress do not exist, there is no meaning in history nor in the world either, and each alike is only fit to be thrown aside as mere rubbish.

The philosophy of history, applicable to realised facts, has no legitimate application to our intellectual and moral determinations, and its only province is to explain, not to judge.

If in the destinies of humanity as a whole, or even of a single nation, the weight of individualities is but little felt; if in so vast a calculation their value is hardly appreciable, they do for all that tell in the limits of a given century; and the historians of the fatalist school, who are very right in an extended horizon only to take count of general causes, and to refer results immediately to *laws*, are wrong when they transport their system within narrower bounds. Nothing prevents them, or rather nothing excuses them, from assigning to human liberty, to diversity of character, and to special providence, a part, and a considerable part too, in the production of events. Let them abstract these on a less limited scale; they may do so without endangering the dogma of divine liberty, while in dealing with the annals of one or of a few centuries, their method compromises at one blow, together with the liberty of man, the liberty even of God.

Of all natural laws, those of history are con-

fessedly the most difficult to determine; but if we succeed in doing this, we obtain a kind of historical psychology, a science of the phenomena of the social soul, which is a real enlargement of the domain of individual psychology, since these manifest and establish certain facts which we cannot study in an isolated soul.

Histories are not history. The man who only looks at external facts and their dates knows nothing of true history, of that which brings to light springs hidden beneath the variety and the succession of external facts. The serious task of the historian is to dig below appearances with a view to discovering the secret significance of these vicissitudes, the real laws by which events are ruled. For there are indeed such laws; an attentive observation finds out the characters of permanence or analogy under which, given the same conditions, the same facts will be reproduced. In this respect the history of humanity connects itself with the great whole of natural history; that is to say, from the analysis of particular facts we may also deduce the general law which combines and explains them. But the integrity of historical judgments has been very often deteriorated by the inevitable influence of success. Fortune is a great corruption of truth: how many actions that pass for great and illustrious have become so only by the aid of this "prestige," and how different a hue they would have received from a different result! It is true that success is the proof of a skilful method of obtaining a certain end, but

it proves nothing as to the value of that end ; nor, again, is it any absolute proof of skill, since personal success is always complicated with foreign wills and circumstances. Nothing indeed is more difficult than to judge correctly of the man that succeeds. How much renown, perpetuated during centuries, has crumbled away when tested by the simple good sense of a better-grounded judgment of men and actions ! This has even been carried to excess. . . .

If the rights of objectivity are anywhere to be extended to the utmost—if the personality of the writer is anywhere to be effaced, it is assuredly in history. Even the subjectivity without which the history would neither be a work of art nor a philosophical work, only lets itself be seen, does not display itself. It blends with everything, and boasts of nothing—still less does it indulge in loud exclamations for fear of being forgotten.

Do what you may to prevent history being a poem, it is necessarily one. We have the historian himself blent with his narrative—a soul mingled with facts—a sort of contemplative providence arranging human destinies by an after-thought. In vain would the historian seek to separate himself from facts ; whatever form he may have adopted, whatever method he may follow, he cannot do this. He must be a poet, do what he will. In relating he will create. History and epic poetry are constantly touching and pursuing each other.

History is the experience of others : the expe-

rience of others touches us but little ; the repetition of the same situation, being disguised under an inexhaustible variety of forms, hardly allows the prejudiced mind to apply the rules it may have deduced from preceding cases : the moment for this application never comes ; we relegate it to the past, we project it on the future ; passion makes us believe our own case unexampled ; we constantly plead some extraordinary circumstance, seeing that what we have ourselves experienced always seems extraordinary,—and we bequeath to our posterity the eventual profit of a study of which we, for our own part, can make no use.

Events are the real judges of events, and—purely moral questions excepted—history only gets itself written under their dictation.

There are stars of the first magnitude that have only become visible to us after six thousand years. The same thing sometimes happens in the firmament of history ; we need a whole age before the light of a certain brilliant but distant star reaches us,—and how many of its rays are lost on their way !

Each age, each individual brings with him new light. This is more particularly the prerogative of certain epochs. Every judgment must then be subject to revision, not to be reversed, but to be better explained, and to acquire in some respects a new meaning.

Symbolism is true. Who would deny that the

succession of facts in the history of a people is, at the same time, a succession of ideas, or if it be preferred, of *intelligible forces*, and that each of these ideas or forces has had its moment of efflorescence before fructification? Now this moment is not only the most poetical, but it is also the most true; and the imperfection, the vagueness of form, is only the index and measure of its ingenuousness; it is a coloured mirror, in which the future contemplates and does not as yet recognise itself. Is the historian to forbid himself to signalise these moments, to sketch their symbols, to indicate the hour when a new force, still without any self-consciousness, and yet yielding to the necessity of blossoming forth, puts on in haste the first form that presents itself, and comes, half-clothed and eyes shut, to knock at the door of the future? It will be said that this is poetry: it is not actually so; it is the confluence of poetry and philosophy. Was the one ever complete without the other? and is not history also an epic? But symbolism has its laws as well as subjectivity, and where the share of intuition is greatest, that of reflection should be greatest too, for fancy and exaggeration are constantly there, watching the moment when the half-opened door may allow them to slip into the house.

With the ancients history was simple because existence was so. Without complicating itself, it could still omit nothing: hence a portion of its

beauty; hence its epic character. This does not imply that external life was not even then composed of more elements than history reproduced; there were at that time, as well as now, arts, trades, commerce; but those things and many others were more unconnected with the political movement: other elements did not even exist; the idea of society, in the modern acceptation, had not appeared: in a word, history written by those antique pens sufficed to its task and mission. In our modern literature it long went on following the old road, where, however, it failed to meet with and collect all its essential elements. In a vast whole, where everything had its use and contributed its weight to the general movement, it only seized one order of facts; in an immense web it only saw one thread; for a long time it was nothing but the history of dynasties. It was only little by little that what made up part of the life of societies came to form part of history as well, and that at length the history of men became the history of man. This progress has since gone on rapidly. Voltaire, who wondered at the narrow range of his predecessors, would wonder at all that his successors have introduced into the domain of history. Indeed, it would be difficult to say what it does not embrace, since it embraces the whole of man, and that all in his nature of most intrinsic and mysterious, all that his thought can conceive of most abstract, most outside of the region of business and politics, has obtained a

right to be signalised as cause or as effect in the exposition of social destinies.

In the appreciation of men and facts much breadth of mind is requisite in order to see; much philosophy to explain; much faith to say everything. Even with all this, perfect truth in history is an inaccessible height.

But above all, one must be man, a complete man, to write the history of human things, we must not have half of our soul insensible and paralysed. If we must not ignore the inferior conditions of our existence, neither must we ignore the Divine in human life and history; we must believe in spirit.

It is an advantage for the historian to have seen the events he narrates, but the advantage is not equal in the case of all. Vision in the true artist and the true historian is so little an affair of the mere eyes, that one who was absent may have seen better than another who was present. There is a more profound insight than that of the eyes, or even of the mind; there are things that one sees with the soul, and this insight, well understood, is a life.

History is the explanation of facts. Now the side by which we understand facts is that by which we dominate them. A world understood is a world conquered. If facts are stronger than men, this is only while men do not possess their secret; intelligence puts them in possession of it. The degree and character of the civilisation of any given epoch is shown not by its history but by the manner in which it

writes history, were it but as to the choice of the objects that it introduces into its narrative. This is the settling of accounts between the present and the past; the final balance left in the hands of the present by the past; the heads of Janus turning to look each other in the face.

History, without doubt, must sum up the mass of facts: it is in its essence, as a German writer points out, only an abbreviation. But to give a summary or an abridgment under an abstract form is not to make facts known even to the reason. An intelligent knowledge of facts can never absolutely dispense with immediate *perception*. You can never make others understand facts that you do not show; and you do not show them in summing them up: however faithfully you may express their idea, it will never be vividly seized, will never become the property at once of the intelligence and the soul, if you have not illumined it by details that affect the senses.

Sometimes we look upon times of political disturbance as most favourable to the composition of history: this is an illusion. The narrative may be more animated, but it will be less true. A peaceful light better enables us to distinguish objects clearly than the vivid glare of the lightning. In the same way, the writer who labours in a season of political stagnation has far more chance of grasping the reasons for the past and the probabilities of the future.

Humanity cannot do all things at once, and, generally speaking, we do not see it *facere celebranda, celebrare facta*.

In order to range a fact amongst the signs of the times we must study the time itself in the aggregate of its most general and undeniable symptoms; the time enlightens us as to the significance and value of a fact as much as that fact itself serves for an index to the character of the time: if the text be not complete without the word, the word, to be intelligible, needs the text.

Every one may discern some decided tendencies in the period in which he lives, and amongst them some tendencies more decided than the rest. But if he hasten to name his century after that particular tendency, there is every chance that he will be mistaken.

2. *Historical principles: Providence, Necessity, Thought and Action, Theory and Practice—Revolutions, and the right of individual resistance.*

The spectacle of the evils that afflict man and society is crushing to the soul. It absolutely refuses to bear this cross alone and unaided. God must bear it with us. Strong in the idea of a recompensing and avenging God, a God who, from His dwelling-place on high, looks down on all the children of men and spies out all their ways, the believer does not indeed lose his sadness, the subject

of which still subsists ; but this sadness is no longer overwhelming. All mysteries are not cleared up ; but from the place of His dwelling God looks down, God watches : this is enough. In the midst of universal disorder perfect order is guaranteed. Since this is so, what objection, what complaint have we to raise ?

Under the empire of the living God, order—but an order whose secret escapes our mortal sight—may be confidently hoped, certainly foreseen, enjoyed beforehand ; it already exists, perfect and entire, in the very fact that God exists and reigns. But in a world without a God—I mean without a God that looks on and heeds ; in a world with no other god than the phantom of pantheists—what earnest soul could fail to be crushed by the very aspect of humanity, and constrained to choose, as soon as possible, between the despair that kills the body and those consolations of materialism that kill the soul ?

We must not be afraid of saying that the thought of a world without a god who punishes, is a thought of despair. The spectacle of his vengeance consoles because his vengeance is justice ; and without faith in justice the human soul is as incomplete as the body itself without the soul. The chastisements of God not only alarm, they also reassure : they reassure in alarming ; they assert the presence of God : now God present is the soul's all.

We must not fear to lower the idea of God in sup-

posing that in the accomplishment of His designs He has regard to the nature of objects, although He probably wills to confound our imaginings by seeking His means where we should but have found obstacles.

Too many persons, even among Christians, let themselves be "guided by their hopes."

Providence cuts the knots that we are slow to unravel; and when they are cut, we seek inquisitively, and pretty easily find, how we might have unravelled them; that is to say, the thing done, and done without us, in spite of us perhaps, we refer it to principles, and make it rational and premeditated, instead of, as it was, accidental. We give the first moments to necessity, the last to reason. Such is the constant course of the human race, and it does it little honour. Why must the party of *expediency* and calculation have its representatives among Christians whose mission in the world is to substitute in matters of religion and morality the question of truth and pure principle to that of calculation and expediency?

The result aimed at by some is generally brought about by others — often indeed by those whose wishes it disappoints, and who have done all in their power to avert it. Providence has reasons, and good reasons, for making them the servants of a cause they disavow. It thus proves to man that his way does not depend upon himself; although, if we look closely, he is the fabricator of his own destinies.

His responsibility remains, and his sovereignty vanishes away.

We must not forge God's signature at the bottom of acts that His holiness disavows.

Let us always pronounce with respect and love the sacred name of Providence, while ever remembering that the future, that progress, that duty, are also Providence!

Whatever has existed was necessary, in so far that all that exists has its reason for being, and that this reason having prevailed over all the reasons for its not being, all existence, by its very fact, implies necessity. In this sense all errors, even the most monstrous, have been necessary. But does this mean that they had the right to be; that it was well to embrace them; that those who did so failed in no duty, nay, rather fulfilled a duty in thus embracing them?

Let us own that, since the commencement of human society, Providence has permitted many things, and that if we are bound to honour and maintain all thus permitted, our respect would necessarily have to attach itself to the most opposite things.

In our opinion, it is impossible to take note too often, or rather too constantly, of the *finger of Providence*; and we know some who abstain from pointing out this Divine intervention in any particular page of history for fear of seeming to exclude it from pages where nothing extraordinary arrests

the human glance. In a word, it is in the name of faith and of respect for Divine things that the men of whom I speak recommend the greatest discretion in the use of this means of Christian instruction and edification.

It was a God alone who could say, "I am come to bring fire on earth." Sublime paradox, that none but a God could utter! It was only a God who could know that He was about to create on the earth two antagonist worlds. He beheld all vices, all hypocrisies, taking shelter beneath the cloak of Christianity; He knew that the worst of all corruption is the corruption of the best things, and the worst of all persecutions that of true Christians by false. Yes, the Gospel has forced human nature to exhale all its evil: but will any one therefore assert that Christianity has been injurious to society? One word is enough. Do we live for time or for eternity? Is the direct object of Christianity, better to organise the society of earth, or to prepare the society of heaven? Do we consider Jesus Christ simply in the light of the inventor of the principles of equality and social fraternity? If we do, let us reject a religion which becomes the occasion of incontestable evils to society. Or else let us accept it as the educator of the soul for heaven; and in that case let us look upon it as fully justified from whatever offences men may please to charge it with.

There are principles that need space to manifest their whole character and develop all their results.

A negative principle, more especially, requires to be observed in a large mass of assembled individualities.

In general, there where all the world suffers, all the world is more or less guilty.

Good does not get done of itself: it requires efforts; and it does not always find, in the wills of those to whom it is proposed, that firm support of immediate interest, that mainspring of personal hope or fear, alone endowed with the talent of improvisation. In all things "the spirit is willing, and the flesh weak." The spirit itself (if by spirit we understand the public reason) is slow. And then, even among the intelligent, or rather, especially among them, prudence interferes, and wants to compound matters.

It seems written in the book of national destiny that, in the advance of social facts, thought and action shall never move with equal step; thought invariably limps breathlessly after action, or action after thought—each is alternately too slow or too precipitate. This incurable disease of society, springing as it does from an incurable disease in human nature, is a fertile principle of political disturbances.

Social theories as well as philosophy affect spontaneity. They pique themselves upon originating in an examination of the nature of things; that is to say, of the true relations of man with man and of the individual with society. And yet all facts militate against this claim. They even lead

us to believe that pure speculation would not have found these theories, would not even have sought for them. They have only made their appearance in the world subsequently to the facts that rendered them necessary.

The history of ideas is not that of liberty. Under this new point of view man produces himself as instrument. He is seldom, perhaps never, wholly conscious of what he does. And although a social truth lies at the bottom of all struggles, yet this truth, under its general and absolute form, only manifests itself to the generation which comes when the struggle is over. Posterity alone knows why the conflict took place, and would tell it, were that possible, to those by whom the conflict was carried on; for no theory has appeared in the world anterior to facts; it is the facts that have engendered the theory: thus it is that all social truths, created one by one both by necessity and opportunity, have come down to us; thus it is that our children will know better than we what it was we really aimed at. It is only God who knows beforehand what He wills and what He does.

The religion of memory, the worship of the past, will be appealed to in vain; they are powerful only when the affections of the present correspond with and justify them; without this they are mere perfumes, which we inhale, but which do not nourish us.

Every man by whose thought or will the face of the social world has been changed, may be compared

to a vessel transporting always through tempests a rich cargo of gold, silver, rare fabrics, or precious stones, from one continent to another. The vessel knows not what it bears, but it is none the less the bearer of all these treasures. Living vessels that we are, we know indeed that we have a freight, and we believe ourselves acquainted with its nature and value; but on these two points we are always wrong. "Luther," wrote a clever woman, "would probably have excommunicated himself at the outset could he have beheld himself as he was when he reached the end of his career."

Each epoch in its turn agitates some fundamental question. But it is rare that an epoch gives their true name to the questions that occupy it. The greatest problems have appeared in the world under fictitious titles. We may have seen a whole people unnecessarily enthusiastic, apparently, about given questions, but sometimes these are only frivolous in appearance, or they are more serious than those who discuss them.

No epoch, till it is over, is thoroughly aware of what it has done or willed. The secret thought of parties, the ultimate reason of their movements, escapes themselves. No one can judge except of his individual intentions.

Man always does more or less than he intends; he either falls short of his mark or overshoots it; he exaggerates or conceals from himself the bearing of his actions: perhaps he has not always the clue

or the measure of his own intention. There is only one thing that he can know with exactness—his duty, and that is enough.

Men of genius and the best methods seldom synchronise; the methods are wanting to the men, the men to the methods. Is it not the same too with institutions which also are methods?

Those who honour calculation only, calculate ill. It is in enthusiasm that the force of society and the guarantee of its future lies, and when enthusiasm shall once have dried up in its midst, calculation will not save it.

A negative evil, an evil without form or name, is the most serious of all. The dumb and passive presence of a false principle is a central blight, an intimate misfortune, of which all others are but signs and effects; only what is neither to be seen nor heard has no existence for the multitude.

Societies are most deeply indebted to those who have resisted them in the name of truth and thought. Everywhere society has, more or less, aimed at becoming the conscience of all; but everywhere too rebellious consciences have been found to protest against this, and to maintain the principle of personal conviction, without which man abdicates his moral nature, his quality of a responsible and consequently a religious being.

Most assuredly it is not we who shall ever dispute the right that laws have to be respected. But a natural distinction presents itself. An unjust law is

to be respected by me, although unjust, when it only affects my interest; and my fellow-citizens, equally aggrieved, owe it the same respect. But an immoral, an irreligious law—a law that would compel me to do what my conscience and God's law condemn, must be defied when we cannot get it revoked. This principle, far from being subversive, is the vital principle of societies. It is the struggle of good against evil. Suppress this struggle, and what is there to hold humanity back on that inclined plane of vice and misery down which so many combined causes vie with each other in pushing it? It is from revolt to revolt, if you choose to employ this word, that societies go on perfecting themselves, that civilisation gets established, that justice reigns, and truth flourishes.

Whenever a deadly principle, ignored, or negligently guarded against, or even favoured by authority, spreads among a people, the opposition it meets with in the zeal of a few individuals is the vital principle destined to conquer it.

The law of antiquated societies is to arrive at regulation by arbitrariness, and at simplicity by its opposite.

Storms in the atmosphere are not more necessary to the economy of our globe than storms of thought to human society.

The path of the human mind is like a giant's staircase, each step of which needs to be subdivided; failing which, humanity now loses breath, now falls back and bruises itself.

It is from shock to shock that nations advance.

Now, in these national shocks, everything being unsettled and open to question, and the people returning for the time to a state of nature, it is impossible and useless to lay down rules. A revolution only receives rules from itself; a revolution is not an action, but a *fact*; not a regular act of civil life, but a *phenomenon*. There must inevitably be one moment, at least, when society lives without laws, one moment given up now to violence, now to moral or intellectual preponderance, but always, at all events, to force. A new order of things is not long forming; but between this new order and the old there is a gap, a solution of continuity, a space where the thread of traditions gets interrupted, and where the authority of laws dies down.

Influenced by the recollections of a thousand generous *revolts* which have asserted in our world the rights of God over the pretensions of men, the rights of truth over the pretensions of error, in short, those of virtue over vice, I have said, and I still say, that it is from revolt to revolt that societies go on to perfection, that justice reigns, and truth flourishes.

Although history teaches that almost all the great questions that have agitated society have had a violent solution, yet it is the duty of *social* man to start from an opposite hope, to spare society too sudden transformations, and to smooth the incline by which humanity advances to new destinies.

To take out of the life of nations the persistence of thought, and the obstinacy of conscience, is to refuse

any morrow to society, is to open out a deep and silent tomb to civilisation.

The true protectors of society, those to whom it owes what it retains of coherence and unity, are those very men with whose names history connects memories of conflict, persecution, and martyrdom.

Resistance to the injunctions of society, even when most disinterested, most conscientious, is still resistance; its aspect is dangerous; the authority of the law suffers from it more or less; selfish passions avail themselves of its example; the spirit of revolt has precedents to quote, and this is an evil. But compare it in thought to that other evil, a general indifference to truth, a general torpor of the conscience; imagine a society that never meets with any resistance to its will, whatever laws it may break, whatever obligations it may impose; and then tell us whether such an obedience be not a much greater evil; whether there be not in this wholly external unity a far more active principle of decay than the one you have discovered in individual resistance; and whether those generous oppositions, which on each occasion seemed as though they relaxed the social bond, did not on the contrary tighten it, and give to society its highest possible degree of coherence. For it is essentially in the vigour of its morality that the force of any society lies; and the more conscientious men it numbers in its breast, ready to resist a human law, the moment it enjoins what God's law forbids, or forbids what God's law en-

joins, the more faithful, submissive, devoted citizens will it possess. Why is this but because the same principle that in certain cases commands disobedience, in general commands submission ; because conscience, that binds us to the Divine law, binds us with proportionate force to the human ; because, in short, the less one is disposed to yield when God would have him resist, the more ready will he be to yield when God requires yielding. The most independent will be found the most submissive, be sure of that ; but do not depend upon the most blindly, most servilely submissive one, who yet does not rank God's will amongst the motives of his conscience, persevering in fidelity when his immediate interest counsels the reverse, and he believes himself able to disobey with impunity. He who only obeys man, without regard to God, obeys ill, and will not always obey. Anarchy has no recruits to hope for in the ranks of conscientious men ; it makes numberless recruits amongst the partisans of implicit obedience. Slaves to-day will be rebels to-morrow.

There is not one of my readers who has not sometimes said to himself, or who may not so say, Here is an action, there is another, others, that I could on no pretext, for no price, at no command, allow myself to commit unless my heart failed me, or I forgot that there was a God ; and if I did such an action I should know very well, and I should say to myself, that I had been wrong ; and if I were to allege in its favour the authority of man, I should reply to myself

that we must obey God rather than man ; and if I sought to persuade myself that I had been constrained to it, I should still feel that nothing ought to have constrained me ; and if I tried to console myself by remembering that at least I blamed my own action, I should be obliged to own that the more I blamed the less I ought to have done it. Which of my readers, I ask, or who is there outside of that narrow circle, that would dare to say, I do not know what the State may enjoin, I do not inquire, but whatever it be, I will do it, even if I blame it ? No one would say this. I should be much less surprised to hear some one say, Whatever the State commands I will do without blaming it ;—but then he must needs add, because there is no God, or because the people is God. And do not despair of hearing this, for everything is said now-a-days.

If every one listened to and respected his conscience, an institution would never absorb individuality ; would never stand forth as a monument of prejudice and of the tyranny of opinion.

I thoroughly repudiate the idea that good morality dispenses with our obedience to human laws, simply because they are unjust ; and I only exclude from a right to be obeyed laws that would compel us to do what conscience and the law of God condemn.

In the moral order, the sentiment of a want is equal to the want itself. A general discontent is justified by its own existence ; and if this uneasiness were without foundation, it would itself be a pro-

found evil, a more serious ill than the imaginary evil it reveals. Something, in any case, needs to be recast; either the social state or the spirit of those who complain of it.

3. *Progress: Material—Moral—Perfectibility—Discoveries.*

The consciousness of humanity never gives back any of its conquests.

Does the human mind, then, make no final acquisition; and might we fairly task with rashness one who should declare the re-establishment of slavery to be impossible? We do not "twice see the shore of the dead;" an error does not die twice; which is saying, in other words, that it does not revive.

We speak of the progress of the human mind, of its rapid ascent; it is of its indolence that we ought to speak. The most simple, most necessary truths have had to surmount a thousand obstacles; and it is only through the strait gate of necessity that they have penetrated the heart, and passed thence into the mind. This universal, this oft-repeated fact proves the tendency of humanity to give feeling the precedence of thought.

There is no great moral and social result which has not been prophesied by the consciousness; no truth whose advent in the world has been absolutely unexpected; no revolution in things of which thought has not prepared the way. The force of things is

not all; *abstractions* count in history; and if you pay attention to it, their presence, their action, is a part of the force of things.

To view the matter *à priori*, I somewhat doubt as to this constant order and this identical return of the same phases. Has each one of these phases, in virtue of its nature, but one single antecedent and single consequence possible? Can religion indeed, only end in poetry, and philosophy in the exact sciences? In order to do this, it would at least be necessary that what is called religion, poetry, philosophy, should be everywhere and always identical; then only might we safely presume that each of their returns would have the same counteractions and the same consequences. Neither does the argument *à posteriori* appear to us more convincing. "Civilisation," it is said, "revolves in the same circle." Now this cannot possibly refer to the whole world, which has never been one, and whose tendency towards this unity, which it will no doubt eventually attain, only dates, so to speak, from yesterday; indeed, it can hardly refer to the civilisation of Europe, of which the moral solidarity, still incomplete, is of comparatively recent origin. It must then be in one and the same country that we look for this phenomenon. But even supposing that all these same elements were to surge up one after the other, must it be necessary in the same order? Are the general conditions, is the starting point, more particularly, everywhere necessarily the same? Do Greece (and in Greece each of the different

elements of which it was composed), Rome, India, the United States of America, present these phases in the same order? Do not mighty causes of interruption or divergency rise up beneath the hand of Providence? But even were the order pointed out to be indeed fatal, I do not see much interest in presenting it under the aspect of its fatality, and especially in viewing the restoration of religion as a mere affair of dates, and a question of change of parts. Religion will not reflower because it is its turn to do so; it will not owe its renewed credit to the discredit or decay of poetry, philosophy, or the exact sciences; it does not need that any of these should remove to make place for it; all these noble daughters of the human intellect, having had religion for their nurse and second mother, cannot always be, as is supposed, incompatible with her; and it seems to me that if we must speak of phases, it is permissible, in addition to all those that are signalised, to predict one other, which shall bring into correspondence with the new *democracy* a *new civilisation*, a phase where we shall see the religious development concur, or at all events coexist, with all other developments. However it may be (for we will not prophesy), it would have seemed to us more interesting to show how the actual state of things in general, in free and highly civilised countries, has constituted religion the first necessity and last refuge of the rising generation.

We are forced to acknowledge that the human

mind advances more regularly than had been at first supposed.

In matters of philosophy and of thought, in general, the human mind advances by antithesis and reaction; it is like the pendulum, whose oscillations are constantly from left to right, and right to left. But the pendulum remains fettered; the value of one of its oscillations is perpetually compensated by that of another, while the action and reaction of the human intellect do not completely balance each other; there always remains a surplus of some kind, and these, added up, form the sum of the progress of the human mind. At first sight man seems to undo as fast as he does; but if we embrace a wider field, we shall convince ourselves of the real and progressive march of society. Does it, however, advance on the good or the bad side? This is another question.

The renewal of all things must needs come from the renewal of hearts. A renewed heart embraces the whole truth, without discerning beforehand all its parts, or foreseeing all its developments. We cannot but admire, and nevertheless, comparing it with the supreme end of human existence, we must not very highly value, any progress other than this. If it were possible—which we do not believe—that, by the force of things and of intelligence, society could, as a society, rise far above all utopias whatever, without becoming a kingdom of God, without giving birth to a kingdom of God within it; if we could not trace in the terrestrial city the first lineaments of the holy city;

if this magnificent frame, ever enriched by some new magnificence, were to wait for its picture in vain, we could not long continue to interest ourselves in so futile a glory, and the irony which we should find at the bottom of all would pierce our heart. Thanks be to God, it is not so; our existence has a reason, and Jesus Christ has taught us why this ancient establishment of society has been permitted to endure.

We are not dreaming of condemning all these works, these admirable developments of human industry. I, for my part, subscribe to all their marvellousness; I would not have one taken away. What I do want removed is the violent anxiety that they occasion, the material fanaticism that, laying hold of men by education, flings whole generations beneath the chariot-wheels of its divinity; the new slavery which binds no longer bodies, but souls, slaves of the soil. I am shown, or promised, laborious, economical, comfortably-circumstanced populations; I am told to applaud, and how, indeed, should I not applaud the happiness of such? But if everything is cultivated in these populations except their conscience; if their happiness, chaining them to the earth, gradually stifles in them the flame of moral life, why then I heartily wish them the loss of so fatal a felicity. I invoke salutary and regenerating misfortune upon their future; for prosperity spreads out life on the surface, and sorrow alone concentrates us, and restores us the consciousness of our true *me*. He who suffers most, lives most, and if there be a happiness that

produces the same effect, it is an original happiness of the soul, which is itself essentially that profound life we seek for.

Material good, which is sometimes a consequence and a sign of progress, does not constitute it. And if it be pursued in another spirit than the spirit of justice and charity, there may be gain, profit, relative amelioration—there cannot be social progress.

At bottom, this question of perfectibility is a capital question; and between those who, thoroughly understanding, resolve it in an opposite manner, there must necessarily be the greatest and gravest of divergences. It is true that one might disbelieve in perfectibility, and yet be no better Christian because of that disbelief; but it is impossible to be a Christian and to believe in perfectibility. If man's intimate nature, if the general direction of his being, changes with time and civilisation—if man becomes essentially better in proportion as humanity grows older, why then we must leave off talking of the fall and of redemption. This single stone removed makes the dome crumble; and yet we have seen Christians, sincere Christians, do more than incline towards this system.

Was it that they were carried away from their religious system by the strongest evidence?—away from a *doctrine* by *facts*? In other words, can it be that the first premiss of Christianity is contradicted by an impartial examination of the world and of

humanity? It belongs to the earnest spirits that may be found outside the pale of Christianity to examine this question, resolved so precipitately in one way or the other by prejudiced and frivolous men. All that we now wish to say is, that there is certainly a progress, a progress which may be called *moral*, inasmuch as it affects manners and customs, which we may describe as follows:—more of justice, more of humanity, more of respect of man by man: but to allow all this is not to allow that man is better; to have granted all this is not to preclude oneself from maintaining that man is exactly the same as he was on the morrow of his fall, and that Adam is born anew in each man that the eternal decrees call to this life of trials.

Nay, more than this, this progress, to which we have conceded the name of moral, is not always real, even in the restricted sense which we do not contest. Institutions, laws, advance; society as such is improved, individuals are not; society has, so to speak, *virtues* which are foreign to its members; it breathes a spirit which is not theirs, and the boasted progress may perhaps be reduced to this;—social institutions, such as ages have made them, exact or actually imply greater or different virtues than of yore.

That man should always be man; that the same causes should necessarily produce the same effects; and that, consequently, there is in one sense nothing new under the sun, is a truth than which none is more true and few so important: the lessons of expe-

rience and of the philosophy of history have no other foundation than this axiom. But the exaggeration of this truth is not less prejudicial than its oblivion. It is impossible that everything should repeat itself; and the course of time, providence itself, or the Divine liberty, introduces into general questions elements which we must know how to discern, else the study of history will be only a snare; and it is just the intuitive promptitude and accuracy of this discernment which has in all times constituted the characteristic difference between statesmen and historians. Historic sense and political tact, which appear so nearly related, are more different than is supposed, and circumstances have more to do than history in the formation of great politicians. Morality alone is constant and perfectly equal to itself, because it is absolutely necessary that the immutable should exist somewhere.

All progress leads to discontent; it is not misery that plants the standard of revolutions.

What! is progress, then, to be always a subject of alarm? Will it always rouse some confused idea of crime and impiety? Will it always find a great number of the most honourable members of society distrustful of and almost in league against it? Yes; so long as the progress of the human heart—that heart which, according to the Scripture, is desperately wicked, and whose wickedness taints all things—does not correspond with the progress of laws, arts, and

even morals. Humanity seems to forget that the first inventions, the first progress, occurred in the family of Cain.

Nothing in God's eyes is progress in humanity except what restores in humanity the image of God. The Christian too, who sees all with God's eyes, in God's light, gives the name of progress to nothing else; for society, being neither external to humanity nor to the plan of God, must tend towards the same end to which man is summoned to aim: we may very easily deduce from this that equality is, in the eyes of the Christian, neither the whole of progress, nor even an essential part of the true progress, but at most (and this remains to be discussed) one of the consequences, or one of the signs of true progress. For a man who has become the equal of all other men is not for that reason more like to God; and a society where the most absolute equality was established would not by that alone correspond any better with the divine idea.

If from one age to another man be equal to man, still there is progress in society, progress in thinking—a very slow progress, I grant: and how, indeed, could man, panting beneath the burden of sin, keep pace with his desires? The double misfortune of his condition is, that he lingers in the mud of error, and when he moves forward his stride is not measured; he does not so much walk as precipitate himself, so that we might say of the progress of society what science teaches us respecting the walk of the phy-

sical man, that it is a succession of constantly checked falls.

The condition of moral truth in the world is this : it is not innate therein ; it does not emanate therefrom ; it reflects itself more or less in this world because of its admirable adaptation to our nature and the nature of things, the whole having sprung from one idea ; in a word, it realises itself much more in facts than in hearts, in the object than in the subject.

The social world is, perhaps, more advanced in Christianity than the individual. Thus I am struck with admiration when I consider the paternal protection that in our country surrounds the accused prisoner. I affirm, that if a man in his daily practice rigorously followed the rules of penal justice he would be in a completely Christian condition.

The progress of moral truth in humanity is rather objective than subjective, rather in our manners than our hearts ; and thus, for example, institutions become more just without men being less unjust. I grant that institutions react upon sentiment, and that the habit of being just becomes, like all habits, a second nature ; but what I do not allow is, that equity in law and softness in manner indicate a proportionate restoration in the secret depths of the heart.

Each age brings with it its novelties ; but nothing is new in an absolute sense, nor can anything be so. Everything in humanity, as also in each nation, is the development of a primitive character, the logical deduction from a first premiss. It is thus that side

by side with civilisation, which is the subordination of the interest of each to the interest of all, the sacrifice of a bad liberty for the sake of a good,—side by side with this civilisation, which began the same day as the family, an opposite principle, that of a silent insurrection against social servitude, has perpetually murmured, growled, or roared in the midst even of the best regulated societies, and from their earliest origin. The most evident, the most acknowledged necessities have not been able to subdue this impatience of all control, this inextinguishable want of a savage independence. The most civilised amongst people and individuals have connived at this secret protestation of the barbarous element. Happy in bearing the yoke of civilisation, men have liked to give themselves the inconsistent satisfaction of breaking it in idea. I know not what foolish pleasure has been found in ruining, in impairing, at least, the foundation of the edifice on which our head rested. Arts have become, by almost general consent, the accomplices of this strange tendency. It has enlisted in its service a considerable portion of our literature, which portion has been just as welcome to the public as any other. The public has equally encouraged destructive and conservative literature.

The sovereignty of God is evident; but I know not that it is anywhere so much so as in those discoveries which, one after the other, have renewed the face of the globe. We must not speak of chance

here ; if there be a God there is no such thing as chance.

Nothing happens but what is necessary, with the one exception of sin. Nothing gets added to a thing complete in itself : humanity only grows and develops itself till it has reached its perfect stature. The world of man is a picture that the Divine artist is perpetually working at. He will only lay aside His mysterious pencil at the last day ; until then, this immense canvas, that seems to us to be already full, offers blank spaces to the Eternal eye. Each discovery, each revolution, serves only to fill up these. We are not speaking here, it will be understood, of moral perfectibility, but of the general destinies of humanity. In whatever period he may be born, each man, before his conversion, is the old Adam still ; the last sinner will have no advantage over the first ; but yet the world has never ceased to renew itself.

History proves that, with the exception of a few attempts made by a small number of absolute monarchs, useful innovations have hardly ever *immediately* originated in high places ; if this has ever been the case, it has been so only as an exception and an anomaly.

III.—OF PEOPLES.

1. *Great Men.*

We often hear rather indiscreet talk about men who are in advance of their age, and who impress their individual character on whole generations.

Now these are generally men who have better understood, more precisely defined, and more energetically expressed the dominant opinions of their own epoch. They have brought forth that with which their century was big; they have concentrated in the burning-glass of their genius rays of truth which, dispersed in the world, had not yet been able to kindle it. But their genius—a strong and faithful expression of a time and country that has made them what they are—is not immense, as is the genius of humanity. Men as they are, they have done the work of men—a partial, limited, relative work. If any being, isolating himself from his country and his period—nay, further, from his individuality—divine the fact, the idea, the dogma that shall stir, convert, vivify men of all times and countries, . . . such a being is no man; he is a God.

It is neither one man alone who can mislead a whole age, nor one alone who can restore it.

One man can only succeed another on condition of not resembling him.

Men are what their age and its ideas permit them to be.

We must not mistake here; the individual does not invent, he finds; he teaches his people less than he is taught by them. All become his disciples, but he, in the first place, was the disciple of all; it is their own thought that he has revealed to them; what is peculiar to him is the having pronounced the magic word, and while giving to his contem-

poraries the consciousness of their instincts, to have at the same time given them a will;—an immense gift this; for to give a will is to give life; it is to engender, to become a father. But, however, it is with this species of generation as with all others,—if there is a father there must be a mother as well. The paternal element is the thought of one only; the maternal is the instinct of all. Thought has made of that instinct a determined will, a fixed resolve, and from that moment the nation has lived.

All the world believes in him who believes in himself; and in a moment of general anxiety, his audacious hopefulness often proves the best of resources.

In estimating the chances of success of an idea, how little a few individualities count for! When an idea does not stand upright by its own vigour, no talent is able to support it; when it has a force of its own, there is no fear of its being unaided. Talents will come, for it is written that the strong shall be helped.

At the present day there are so many great men that there are none. It is impossible adequately to celebrate so many glories:

“One wrongs the other, and his Reverence still
With a new saint encumbers his discourse.”

But this is not the only cause of the difference between our age and that which preceded it; it is not because we have too much to admire that we have left off admiring, but rather because we have admired too much. The eighteenth century exhausted

itself thus: not choosing to be fanatical it became enthusiastic; it admired right and left. Compared to ours, that incredulous age was credulous to an excess: it had faith in its men, in its productions; ours believes little in any man or any thing; it believes in force, adores force. Now force being at the present time everywhere and nowhere—its last personification having been him who was surnamed *the man of destiny*,—our enthusiasm, unless it goes back to him, turns into a vague and listless contemplation. The eighteenth century, fatal as its demolitions were, did nevertheless, whatever it may have said, believe in liberty, in individuality; we, for our part, believe in necessity. How then should we be enthusiasts, and what have we to oppose to those long triumphs of the eighteenth century, if not the bewildering succession of a multitude of ephemeral popularities?

The memory of great men is the treasure of the nation that has produced them.

Eminent men do one work, and their memory does another: often, indeed, their memory is the most durable and best portion of their work.

Of all the advantages to which our ambition aspires, celebrity is the one that has the least connection with happiness.

In no career can one be a great man without courage.

It is most dangerous to wish to reduce the whole life of a great man to one only and persistent idea.

No doubt, there has been no great existence that has lacked unity, but this unity resides more in the soul than in the idea. The soul enters into life in full activity and in its prime; and one may say, in a general sense, that it wills from its first onset all that it will ever will. But thought is progressive; it does not embrace its whole horizon at the first glance. It takes possession of it gradually; by increasingly large portions, by a comprehension ever more keen, by an impetus ever more rapid; it has grasped its whole destiny long before reaching its last term; but we may affirm, upon the faith of history itself, that great men have only acted by successive inspirations; that their plans have extended with their conquests; and that there is not one of them who, in beginning life, marked out its sequence on an immutable plan, and according to a single idea.

I repeat that there was unity there nevertheless, powerful, triumphant beforehand, but obscure and without self-consciousness, and rather in the condition of a tendency, of a passion, than in that of a distinct and firm design. The historian—true prophet of the past,—carrying himself back to the starting point of the great man, perceives what the great man himself did not perceive in himself, an idea, the faint lineaments of which indicate nevertheless the whole definite and wide proportions of the future great man. The immaterial individual shapes itself slowly in the course of life, as the physical individual does in the

mother's womb; life is a long gestation of the moral being. But in signalling to us the moral element that dominates a whole life, the historian will, I think, guard against attributing, by a kind of retrospection, to his hero at his *début*, the designs that he probably only fully conceived when far on in his career. He will recognise that it is with the great men of action as with poets, who, in a sense peculiar to themselves, *know not what they do*, and do it perhaps all the better in consequence, for the true force of their genius is in the soul, and the soul is not given to theorising.

2. *French and English—National Pride.*

No people bend more willingly under the yoke of fashion than the French. To follow the fashion is a duty in France.

A witty and speculative people consoles itself for the loss of its liberties by the liberty of the intellect. This has always been the case with the French.

Woman in losing modesty loses all at once. Even at the present time the disasters of France, the imperfections of its civilisation, are in great part explainable thus.

The character of the French requires a serious monarch, we are told by Montesquieu. May we venture to add, that it requires a serious God? Elsewhere religion, even Catholicism, can humanise without compromising itself; in France, a sacred

barrier will always separate, in every department, the serious from the familiar. Elsewhere they mingle; in France they exclude each other. Paganism itself would be grave in this country; and it was so. Grace and amenity did not prevail in the religion of the light and frivolous Gauls. Each people gives to its ruling tendencies some counterpoise, which it especially seeks in its religion, while at the same time proportioning it to its stature, and accommodating it to its character. It was natural, therefore, that the priests of Gaul should be Druids. The same instinct still makes itself felt in French Christianity, whether it be Catholic or Protestant.

A nation of clever and heartless people would be a nation of egotists—prudent egotists, you will say; but just because of this universal prudence, the egotism of each individual would encounter barriers which his passions would chafe at, being unable to overleap. Prudence would probably change into cunning; vices would assume a scientific form; society would present fewer revolting aspects; but withered in its very roots, it would soon have no sap to send into its different branches, and beneath the ardent light of an ever clear sun we should see it shrivel and die.

One observation which will occur to those who study the history of the two countries is, that in England honour has never had the same influence as in France. In the English we see on one hand a display of coarseness, of impudence in evil, and on

the other we have to admire an austerity and elevation in good. Interest and conscience are the two standards in England. There is nothing intermediate between these two motive powers.

In France, on the contrary, the gulf between interest and conscience is admirably filled up by honour. We must own that this principle may lead to a thousand hurtful and evil things ; nevertheless, originally, honour had for its function to replace conscience. Once when conscience defaulted, honour came forward as its next of kin and representative. Later, morality having separated itself from conscience, and virtue retiring, honour remained almost alone.

We may praise our country with a good grace, for it is not quite the same as praising ourselves ; but we can censure it with a better grace still ; it makes us seem modest.

National pride—identical to itself in all countries alike, and presenting no differences but those of form or intonation, bearing the impress of vanity in France, of scorn in England, and of roughness in Germany—national pride has constantly repudiated all foreign judgment. Nothing more intractable and less reasonable than a pride that can say *we*, and which seems to be only exacting in behalf of others.

Abuses seem greater the more our light augments, and in fact they are more intolerable when they wound not only interests and rights, but the public conviction ; in short, one might say that towards the end of their reign their venom becomes more acrid,

their pretensions more exorbitant, either because this is so in point of fact, or because contrast leads us to believe it so.

The best institutions as to solidity and duration are not the most in conformity with theory; faith preserves them better than reason, and the most rational are hardly consolidated till the convictions of the mind have become the property of the soul; and the citizen, no longer ceaselessly searching for the reasons of his obedience, obeys by a lively and involuntary impulse, the principle of which is none other than faith.

It is not the peoples who reason best that are the strongest; and the force of man, speaking only of force, lies more in his conviction itself than in the validity of the proofs on which he bases it.

The ideas of a people, or of humanity at large, are never mean.

Distrust the aspirations and hopes of a people willing to ignore its ancestors; it is but the present, or the near and material future, that interests it; with noble and holy hopes it has nothing to do.

Woe to the epoch which aims at shaking prejudices without confirming morals in an equal degree!

Perhaps for moments of crisis and enthusiasm a few enlightened men may suffice; but without information universally diffused and wisely distributed, a nation cannot organise itself, and has no guarantee for its permanence or importance.

A multitude is often more easy to deceive than a single man; and amongst falsehoods it is the coarsest and most improbable that are the most readily believed, for the popular imagination can bear nothing mediocre; and in everything it is the enormous that captivates it.

Each people cultivates one truth at the expense of all others; but it is always on a people that the administration of that truth is conferred, so that, considering it as part of the whole of humanity, each people may be said to be the head of a school, or, so to speak, a system.

3. *The European Crisis and Christianity.*

The world goes its own way, and thinks it works its own will; but it is working, far more than it believes, the will of God, and promoting the cause of the saints: the world speaks of civilisation, riches, liberty; God gives it without stint all these things which ought to lead man to repentance; but He as unhesitatingly takes away what He gave; He heaps up clouds and tempests in clear and shining skies; He makes accumulated blessings to produce calamity; He destroys, as He created, in order to create in Christ Jesus more souls to good works.

Religion, which contains in itself true nature and the truly natural, constantly tends to bring back civilisation to its true conditions, and approximates it to

nobleness in proportion as it removes it from artifice ; for if coarseness be ignoble, the artificial is scarcely less so.

In remounting from century to century we shall find that all the great phases of humanity correspond with or lead to a great revolution of religious thought.

Religion sustains humanity above the abyss ; an abyss which we must either see or have seen, in order to adore the hand that holds us suspended above it.

Christianity still preserves the world from the wrath of God. It is, perhaps, with reference to its propagation that events thus crowd, and nations are shaken by a fearful crisis. A few light-minded unbelievers will not cause the Most High to repent ; and the immense importance of circumstances will not prove a false measure on the part of Providence.

The multitude is panting, as it were, with an instinct that does not deceive it. In the midst of unchanging nature, beneath a serene and genial sky, when no external cause, as it seems, provokes social convulsions—in a word, in a state which may be called normal and regular—each one is saying, “This cannot last ; this must come to an end !” All the world is waiting, listening ; men sleep, arms in hand ; they dream of war after having argued in favour of peace ; it seems that all situations are doubtful and tend to become defined ; that all relations are strained and tend to break loose.

It is the present detaching itself from the past ;

the new *régime* replacing the old; the chrysalis opening to free the future it imprisoned. All this is by no means clear: similar transformations have been pretty nearly always going on. As all social progress proceeds by successive leaps, each of which, after having exhausted itself, is replaced by a new leap, it is probable that we are in the very crisis of one of those vigorous movements by which, as by knots, we measure the speed of the vessel of humanity. But what is the character of this movement? Towards what shores does the vessel sail? What is the veritable accomplishment of the destinies of humanity? *Faith* tells us that man only casts anchor in eternity; that eternity is the port, and that the vicissitudes and revolutions of the visible are subordinated to God's purposes with regard to the invisible world. *Philosophy* assigns no definite term to the development of human destinies; in its opinion, a gradual, unlimited perfectionment of the social state is the whole destiny of the human race: an ever more energetic action, a harmony ever more complete of the elements of that perfection, such is the eternal asymptote of our species. At the head of these elements our age has placed liberty, a term under which equality is clearly understood, alternately as guarantee and as result of this liberty.

Religious wars, properly so called, proceeding from an immaterial principle, only modified the social state in virtue of that principle and in the proportion that it enjoined. The war that we are now sup-

posing, fraught with materialism in the masses, materialistic up to a certain point in its very principle, has for its last term, and perhaps its final aim, a far more thorough remodelling of society. The harrow of '89 encountered a stone which obliged it to recede; but this was only to drive with fresh impetus against the obstacle, and thrust it out of the way. Internal convulsions would increase the intensity of the calamity; the question being no longer of territorial wars, but of the war of two principles which have no geographical boundaries, which do not so much excite nations against nations as each nation against itself. There are two closely intertwined Europes, in short, which seek to free themselves from each other's grasp. Representatives of the two principles that divide them, two giants provoke, and will perhaps hurry on the decision, which cannot be arrived at without them.

The evils with which the world has been flooded in the name of religion, have had their source in the eminently correct idea that religion alone gives the true signification of each man and each society; that there is in us nothing more profound, nothing that more decidedly determines what we are; and that our declaration of what we believe, is, at the same time, and inevitably, a declaration of what we wish to be. Putting aside every leading mind, it is not surprising that the social power should have been everywhere more or less tempted to regulate the belief of the laity or the teaching of the priest-

hood. Neither can we wonder that the priesthood should have essayed, by the assistance of the State, to dominate a fact of this importance.

Superficial observers of events (and these form the majority) assist unconsciously at an immense religious operation of mind in all parts of our continent; they do not see that everywhere Europe gravitates towards a religious solution of the difficulties of civilisation, and that the problem which occupies all serious men is how to re-establish, between the internal and the external, between thought and facts, a balance that has been long since destroyed. Now this third term required, this dominant and reconciling term, is most assuredly neither man nor material things—it is God; it is religion. It is wonderful how religious preoccupation grows together with that respecting political theories and industrial progress. This fact can only be denied by those who either do not look about them at all, or who only look on one side. Even where nothing has broken out openly, a very average attention may discern a silent but incessant fermentation going on. True, this is quite unconnected with anything else, if we are to believe men who have read the history of the revolution in England, treated by a dozen different authors, without perceiving that it was religion which made not only that revolution, but we may say England herself, such as she has appeared for the last hundred and eighty years. And

if it come not to pass in the time of these men themselves, their sons will assuredly see a new Europe emerge out of the revolution that is slowly going on in the general mind, and which they hold to be a mere isolated symptom. A more attentive and internal study of England, Germany, and even of Italy, might give them much material for thought.

The religion of the Cross nowhere appears out of proportion with civilisation; on the contrary, however civilisation may advance, it always finds Christianity ahead of it.

There is not one of the principles of Christianity which has developed all its consequences; not one of its precepts which has afforded all its results; not one of the moral germs that it has sown in the world which has borne all its fruits.

Christianity, even at this day, which to us seems so advanced a one, is very probably far from having yet produced all its effects in the conscience and life of humanity—from having expressed its whole thought and uttered its last word. In one sense it said its whole say at once; in another it has still much to say, and the world will only end when Christianity shall have said all.

Everything relating to social truth, which is now an axiom, was for a long time a problem. The true problem is to find out how such truths ever could have been problems. In all other kinds of science and art the human mind advances more rapidly.

It is slow only in the research of the good—the right. It only deduces laboriously, and after much investigation, the immediate consequences of an acknowledged principle. Perhaps we are still at the present day, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, involved in some enormous error which Christianity will one day teach us to blush at, as it does now at torture, slavery, and constraint in the matter of religion. The reformations that take place owe much less to the strength of conviction that demands them, than to a certain force of things, which makes the very obstacles that seemed to render a cause impossible, concur to bring about its success. The last blow given to abuses is often dealt by their defenders. Those who wanted to do the good, see it effected by others who had no such intention. Truth is stronger than its adversaries, for it conquers them—stronger than its champions, for it dispenses with them. Everything in events conspires for the truth; and on the part of man almost everything conspires against it.

Instead of being founded by Christianity, modern society owes its origin to the Church of Rome. This form was necessary, we are told, and we are challenged to devise any other under which Christianity could have established itself in young Europe. But what then? Is there no other method but what we can imagine? and are the limits of our conceptions limits to God? There are two necessities: the one absolute, the other relative. Assuming infidelity, the prevailing

of the flesh over the spirit, and the Church resolving to walk by sight, no doubt all that took place was necessary; but is this the stand-point Christians ought to take? and because they cannot imagine how things could have been brought about without this iniquitous blending of the spiritual and temporal, without the sword and stake, are they justified in concluding that everything occurred according to absolute necessity, that is to say, according to truth and according to God? They are accustomed, we know, to call us rash; but in what can rashness lie, if not in forcibly dragging the wisdom of God along the track of human passions, and making Him will retrospectively all that we have willed?

If history taught me nothing whatever of the agitations of human thought previous to the Gospel, I should infer them from the very presence and truth of the Gospel; I should say that, if the Gospel were true, the world before its advent must needs have been sceptical or pyrrhonian, for three reasons which make up one—the absence of redemption, its felt necessity, and the impossibility of foreseeing it.

Civilisation is not a deep and radical change of the heart of man. It encloses the passions of the heart in a net, but it does not kill them; it covers the savage, it does not do away with him. The savage—the man of nature, if you will—is ready to reappear whenever the occasion offers or the temptation is presented. Civilisation has not absorbed the brutal element in the heart of man, the "*pars*

leonina" of which Horace speaks. Civilisation renders its explosions less frequent; it stops up the ways of egress; it rolls a stone to the mouth of the cave of Cacus; but Cacus is still there. It bridles all hatreds except religious hatred.

We cannot believe the Gospel without allowing that there have been universal errors.

We need only to have somewhat studied the opinions of different eras in the books that record them, to be thoroughly convinced that, in an order of things where the moral element prevails, human prevision is worth very little. Some minds prophesy the past admirably; the future has few confidants.

It is true that Divine prophecy leads the glance of faith on towards the future, and even towards a definite point; but this is from a great distance, and the intermediate is left undefined, in order that the believer may be encouraged, and yet not too much so; and that the consciousness of truth, duty, and right may ever remain for him the first and sovereign prophecy.

If posterity has the great advantage of pronouncing the oracles of truth, the religious spirit has the distinguished prerogative of anticipating and predicting the judgments of posterity. On moral questions, it knows from the very first what posterity will repeat later.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY.

I.—SOCIAL PRINCIPLES.

1. *Christianity and Society : Duties towards Society—Morality—Humanitarianism and Christianity.*

THE first punishment of every soul and every society without God is to be no longer able to depend upon anything. This first belief carries away with it all beliefs ; this primary truth withdrawing from the sphere of humanity, leaves the barrier open and the field free to the most appalling imaginations. . . . The primitive bases of society, moral laws, natural affections, truths fused with the great truth, being thus detached from their centre, descend ignominiously to the rank of problems. Everything, even the execrable, may be defended ; everything, even the indispensable, denied. Interest and necessity may still keep up the old combinations, but in the intellect everything is loosened, scattered, lost.

In proportion as the idea of the *good God*, and of *our Father in Heaven*, is strongly grasped and keenly felt, it opens and softens the heart ; it fills it with benevolence and gentleness ; it disposes the soul to

mercy and succour; it creates a *human* interest in each; it founds sociability on a moral and sincere basis. (Christian beliefs are alone capable of dilating hearts, of interesting man in man as such, of realising universal fraternity. In assigning to them these effects, we are justified by their very nature as well as by experience.) Every Christian heart has loved humanity. No man who does not love it is a Christian. These two truths are proof against all attack.

A society that does not understand its religion or study its own language does not come within the terms of true civilisation.

(No one is contented but the believer; the believer is however contented, and in giving the principle of contentment to a people, one would give it the balance or arrears of happiness—give it something better than happiness.)

A Christian people is a people of Christians, for it is not the people, it is the individual who believes, hopes, loves, and obeys. Public piety, so called, is made up of the piety of private individuals; and just as a family of pagans cannot be a Christian family, so a people cannot be Christian if it be composed of families that are not so. Everything is real, substantial, in the kingdom of God, and fiction has no place there.

One feels that the change in the relations of man with God has involved one in the relations of man with man; that society—a condition willed by God,

and without which man is only half created—does not exist in its true sense; that it is only made real by the communion of spirits in one thought; and that the first effect of religion is to organise such a society.

Our first duty towards society, if you are absolutely bent on resolving the whole question into this, is to be exacting and severe towards ourselves; and he who thoroughly knows what all the world should do, but knows not, or chooses to ignore, his own obligations, is a less valuable member of society than he who knows little about the duty of others, but exactly knows his own, and does it as he knows.

(A reform of the whole is illusory unless a reform of individuals correspond therewith. The collective work may concur with the individual, but the action of the latter upon the former is far more important and certain. The contrary opinion is one of the capital errors of this enlightened age.)

(Never, we think, has it been more plainly shown than now how necessary are religious convictions to give consistency and strength to morality. In decisive circumstances, in affairs where an alarming degree of responsibility accumulates on one man, *faith* is necessary to *righteousness*. "Do your duty and trust to God!" this cry of the old Horace only finds an echo in the soul that believes in God,—that is, in a living God. It is difficult to be perfectly just without believing that God will see to con-

"The relation
society to

sequences—will take upon Himself the results of our justice. Now this is a faith which respectable worldly people have very little of, and yet everything proves that it is to such a faith as this that nations and individuals owe their real strength. At this very time, if we inquire what countries will best, come what may, resist the convulsions to be brought about by the conflict of opposing principles, we believe them to be those, whatever their political theory or distinctive government, in which religious faith, even though it be not pure, still serves as a basis and support of the moral faith, which, without it, would be reduced to a vague, wavering, uncertain instinct. Strength is not, and will not be found, in the best organised, but in the most moral, that is, the most believing. It is, then, urgent to restore the basis of morality; to give once more a religion, that is to say, the Gospel, to our populations; to preach it everywhere with fervour and fidelity, in season and out of season, before God preaches with His thunder.

Religious faith, if it depart, takes with it moral faith; oaths have no more solemnity; actions are judged by success; liberty is but the isolation of individual wills, an organised defiance, and the consecration of egotism; public calamities are alike without dignity and without consolation: in a word, the absence of religious convictions withers up society, gradually reduces it to dust; and revolutions, by which believing nations sometimes strengthen, and

multiply their resources, may very easily prove fatal to nations without faith.

When the great idea of God brooded over society, from that idea—vividly realised by some, vaguely admitted by others—proceeded and spread over the world a crowd of firm, living, uncontested moral convictions—pure streams, where even those that knew not how to ascend to their source might at least quench their thirst. Men lived in a world of realities; they walked with bold step on ground that did not give under them; they fell asleep full of confidence in a moral world, and as sure of finding it again when they woke as the sun in the sky. Now-a-days everything yields, vanishes beneath our feet, our hands, our glance. One would buy the slightest axiom with gold; one would embrace as a saviour he who should fix once more in our soul the commonest of moral commonplaces; one would rejoice to believe in one's own soul at least, till one came to believe in God.

(If you want to see public relations founded on something besides necessity, animated by something better than the febrile movement of passion or the violent impetus of circumstance, in a word, quickened as a healthy body is by pure blood, you must require these grand effects from religion alone. A society without religion is a body without soul.)

A people at once without affections and habits, improvising its wisdom day by day, unfurling its sails to catch the wind of every system, exhausting its

moral force in the fatiguing alternatives of enthusiasm and disappointment—this, we repeat, is a melancholy spectacle. Who would not give back habits to such a people? But who would hope to root them in any other soil than that of moral conviction? And where could such a conviction be found save in the domain of religious faith?

Humanitarianism is philanthropy in the mass, and hope on a great scale; it is the worship of humanity, devotion to its future, and more immediately, it is the pursuit of a better distribution of social advantages. There are, moreover, two humanitarianisms, one of the head, the other of the heart; we have already given our opinion of the former, and would now assure the second of our sympathy. It is mistaken, we feel convinced; but if error ever were beautiful, there could be no more beautiful error.

(Humanitarianism is harsh to the individual; Christianity is indulgent. The one strips individuality to clothe humanity, and does not succeed in so doing; the other, in the interest of all, occupies itself lovingly with each, encourages, protects, enriches, and establishes general happiness upon the multiplication of individual felicities.) It does not drag man as a victim to the altar of the humanitarian Moloch; does not immolate him to the transcendental interest of an abstract being, of an idea having no contact with his heart; does not expect the impossible from him; asks for his heart instead of snatching it from him; pays him magnificently

for what it obtains from him—makes the best part of his wages to consist of his very sacrifices; enriches him by his losses, and rewards him for having loved by the delight of loving. This grand solution of an insoluble problem, this transformation of a fatal duality into a beneficent and marvellous unity, is the masterpiece of the Gospel, its triumph, its incommunicable privilege; nothing can deprive it of this glory, not even universal neglect. This glory would still shine forth in the fruitlessness of our efforts to found what it alone can found; it would insure its triumph in our final confusion, and in the day of the revelation of all things each of its rays would become a thunderbolt to crush our blindness and our ingratitude.

2. *Liberty and Social Questions.*

- (1.) *Liberty in general: its Excellence; its Perpetual Tradition—Liberty, Order, Obedience—True and False Liberality—Christianity and Obedience.*

(The love of liberty is the need of eminent minds.

A sincere love of liberty was never an ordinary thing. Even in the present day we may say of it what La Fontaine has said of true friends, "Nothing more common than the name; nothing more rare than the thing.")

Yes; liberty is the mother of every good thing: yes; truth, piety, virtue, delight themselves in liberty, vice and crime in slavery; and wherever conscience

and thought are free, there is a crowd of chances in favour of good. We do not mean to say that liberty will infallibly insure us all these blessings, for man is not good; but we do say, that with liberty we shall get rid of a thousand evils.

to affirm (It is by increasing in man the sentiment of his personal weight and responsibility that we increase his worth. Man is only at his best when he is as completely free as consists with the freedom of others being equal to his own.)

The tradition of liberty, be very sure, is perpetual as that of truth. There never was an epoch where liberty, which is one of the truths of the social order, had not its representatives and witnesses.

Those who would impose on the human race their own stationary or retrograde instinct are mistaken if they imagine that the wish for liberty has not descended into the mass of minds; and all the more thoroughly penetrated them, that the object it invokes hides itself under splendid clouds. The liberty that so many echoes call for is not the liberty that we shall get, but whether in good or evil, the liberty we shall never have. Never mind! it is liberty! the most beautiful word in any language if there were not that of love; a word which must seem attractive to every man, since it is the name of a thing that every man, whether from good or bad motives, wants, and to which the dignity of man is incontestably attached. ("When once," says Bossuet, "we have found means to catch the multi-

tude by the bait of liberty, it follows blindly, provided it only hears the name." It is in the name of liberty, or of glory, that the masses have been convoked; and when both these words of command have been spoken at once, they have not required any articulate direction—they have set out on their march.

But, on the other hand, let not the opposite party be misled; there is in this nothing more than an instinct. Liberty is far from being, as a principle, so much loved by the masses, as men imagine. Our publicists, who have, generally speaking, too little acquaintance with the people, because they come too little into contact with them, are not aware that political ideas, after having easily penetrated the highest strata of society, which are the thinnest, sink much less readily through the inferior strata, which are the thickest. In these classes there is, generally speaking, very little consciousness of what is thought and done on the surface, consequently very little political consistency; of all liberties, that of the soil is the only one they ever well understood; and so it is even in our day, with a few exceptions, which we must look for exclusively in the countries that enjoy a decided moral culture, which is in principle only the culture of the religious sentiment. Elsewhere we must not hope from the populace for any great constancy in a conflict which has not the defence of the soil for object; and, above all, we must expect, in the case of reverses, to see this

populace ready for masters as well as for liberators.

(Separate the idea of liberty from that of its end, which is our individual perfecting, the good of society, and the glory of God, and what is left to you under this name? Nothing but a savage instinct.

Woe to him who sees in liberty only a means of oppressing the liberty of others! Woe to him who loves only his own liberty!

Liberty cannot subsist alone; she requires for auxiliary either action or danger, or principles that render her respectable.

Liberty will protect truth only.

Religion and literature are two liberties.)

All intellectual and moral movement produces more or less agitation; all development of liberty is more or less stormy; and those who, following the example of the noble Pole, prefer a perilous liberty to a tranquil servitude, resign themselves to these inconveniences as to a necessity. (The liberty of the press, of industry, of trade, of education—all these liberties, like the fertilising rains of summer, come to us borne upon the wings of the storm! Temporary crises are the almost indispensable condition of all social improvement; they make victims, but yet without this liberty, of whose rough and sudden movements we are afraid, we should fall back to the level of those nations whose hereditary degradation excites our pity.) A liberal Government, indeed, ought, and can, prevent rights being compromised; but to seek to hinder any

idea from reaching a people and agitating their mind, is as insane as to try to hold back the winds from crossing the frontiers, or to subject the birds of the air to custom-house dues.

If all perils belonged to liberty, and perfect tranquillity were the portion of servitude, I should still prefer liberty; for liberty is life, and servitude death. But if history does indeed attest that the giving birth to liberty be generally difficult and fraught with anguish, it equally attests that liberty, once established, is the only guarantee of the repose of nations. As liberty is the satisfaction of all rights, liberty is order, and order produces peace. The best way of stifling murmurs is to take away all pretext for them; the only way of preventing revolutions is to revolutionise. A people has never demanded more than it really needs; nay, it is so little disposed to go beyond that limit, that often it voluntarily stops short of it, preferring for long a disastrous repose to disturbances that might better its situation. But one way or other, sooner or later, right must assert itself, and then come times of deplorable struggle, for which liberty is made responsible, while in truth it is despotism that should bear the blame.

We know, as well as others, what gloomy ideas this word liberty revives; we know that in many ears it sounds as the signal of civil discord, and it is not without a degree of apprehension that one ventures to proclaim it! But is not this timidity a weakness? What word is there that has not been

dishonoured? What word fallen from heaven does not recall earth's crimes? What, indeed, is there so liable to abuse as holy and sublime things—religion, philosophy, liberty? It is because they are great that they may be made the pretext for great evils. The human soul refuses to be carried away by anything low: ever seeking the way to its native home, it is liable to be seduced and influenced by every appearance of grandeur; it requires to find a glory in whatever it loves. What then! because the name of liberty has been inscribed by profane hands on the banner of rebellion, shall despotism henceforth alone claim Divine right, and liberty pass but for a capricious and presumptuous human invention?

The love of liberty is either an eminently social sentiment, or the most anti-social instinct ever known. With some it is a generous enthusiasm; with others, in appearance also an enthusiasm, but in reality a selfish passion. With some it is the surest guarantee of order; with others it is almost tantamount to disorder.

There are two ways of desiring liberty. It may be wanted either as an interest or a principle. These two points of view do not indeed exclude each other, but they are quite distinct. The vulgar liberal is a man to whom society is irksome, who impatiently endures its constraint, who regrets all that he sacrifices of individual to general convenience, who aspires after the absolute independence of his own will. I will not go so far as to call him a savage; his reason

may teach him to yield to necessity; he may be a worthy man; but for all that I look upon him as a vulgar liberal. With less culture, or more defective education, he may on occasion become an instrument of anarchy, for to him society is but a necessary evil.

The liberal of higher tone is a man to whom society appears the end, the order, the normal condition of society; and being eminently social, it is in the interests of society that he demands liberty. It is to ennoble society that he assigns as large a part as possible to individuality. It is for the good of society that he repudiates all useless, vexatious, or sacrilegious restraints that may corrupt association, and deprive it of its charms. He desires society, union, harmony, and hence it is that he desires liberty. In a word, liberty seems to him an eternal law of human nature, a powerful method of improvement. These two men, by uniting, may produce immense results; but the palm belongs to the one who rests on a moral idea. In my opinion, such a one is still rare, nor will he be common till culture—not only intellectual, but far rather moral and religious—shall itself have become common.

Spiritualism is liberal; liberalism is spiritual. Materialism leans with all its weight towards tyranny; and if in our day there be anything that menaces liberty, it is not, as of old, superstition; it is not the sour zeal of a few bigots, neither is it the imperious and despotic statesman (liberty would know how to resist all this); it is the anxiety, the passion for

material well-being. Its tendency, let us be assured, is in favour of tyranny.

Liberalism gradually lowers the barriers which, by dividing the surface of nations, limited their glance to intensify their affection. It lays down general ideas, which, being true and human, are generally acceptable, and sooner or later will be everywhere accepted. It unites nations, but it effaces them. It takes no account of traditions, they fetter it; nor of particular symbols, having itself but one; nor of the religion of memory, knowing only the religion of hope. Connecting itself with no visible fact, having no point of contact with anything historical, admitting none of those individual and contingent elements which are the only things by which the human heart is really touched, it remains, despite the beauty of its theories, arid, as is everything abstract; cold, as is everything general, until Christianity, taking the place of absent patriotism and extinguished local affections, becomes a fatherland for all souls exiled in a desert of light, and, as it were, remakes for them (by hopes that belong but to itself) a past, traditions, a moral *bond*, in short, where they may descend and rest.

Liberalism in elect natures corresponds with sentiments equally noble and profound, with which the soul may live and nourish itself. In such souls it is justice, charity, dignity, reason; it is the whole of social truth. Patriotism has something of fortuitous and arbitrary; and like all particular attachments, it

divides love into fractions; the idea of liberalism wears an impress of necessity and universality; the patriot sees the nation in the man; the liberal sees the man, the man above all, in the nation, looks upon him not as a chance companion at life's table, but as the host, the guest, the client of God, as His image and ours, as God and ourselves in others. No doubt that, thus conceived and felt, true liberalism is a more beautiful thing than patriotism; and looking upon it in this sense we are in advance of the foregoing century. But this is not the sense of the multitude, which will long require to keep up its warmth, and practise itself in loving, by means of those particular affections which are more within its reach.

Wherever the Divine ray has not descended, liberalism is merely an affair of logic or pride, and it is very far from making up to the soul for personal attachments, local preferences, or even the prejudices of habit. So long as the liberalism of the masses be not Christian, it will but be a coarse syllogism, a barren thing, a confederation of egotisms, in spite of appearances, and even a retrograde step towards savage life; in a word, the ruin if not the salvation of humanity; its shame if not its glory. Such as it often shows itself, it neither softens, purifies, nor elevates the heart; it is not like patriotism, a development, an extended application of family feeling; far from drawing the soul closer to the natural objects of affection, it removes it farther off, and dissipates it; by diffusing it over an indefinite

surface it prevents its fixing on any given point ; it hollows, empties it out, withdraws its living sap ; it fills the place of attachments by opinions, and substitutes bitter passions for affectionate enthusiasm.

There are two kinds of liberalism ; the one selfish and savage, of which all the world is capable, and has the germ in itself, whose principle, if we look at it closely, is much the same as that of despotism ; the other, intellectual, generous, truly social, is the fundamental idea of modern civilisation and the condition of all true progress. These two liberalisms have so many symptoms in common, that we may for a long time confound the two : but there is one sure way of distinguishing between them ; it is to question them both on the subject of religious liberty—the one detests, the other honours it. Whence comes this ? From the fact that the one, which is only selfishness, cares nothing for religious liberty, self-abnegation and generosity being requisite to defend it in all cases whatever ; while the other, and only true liberalism, which in liberty loves a *truth*, not an *interest*, flies at once to its defence, as to that of every other truth of the same order : it is enough in its eyes for it that it should be a truth.

The respect of any man or any people for religious liberty is the exact measure of their love for liberty in general. Whosoever loves not religious liberty, in reality loves no other ; for if he does not love the one which is a possession of the mind, not the body, it is a sign that in all others it is only the body or

the material, and not the spirit, that he cares for; it is not a right, a truth, a principle that he defends, but merely an interest, and merely his own interest: his liberalism, in short, is nothing more than egotism.

Liberty will be loved as a pure virgin, and not as a courtesan. I cannot honour with the name of liberal a man to whom liberty of thought is insupportable. And this liberty being, historically and logically, the starting point of all others, the title of liberal is ill suited to a people that does not respect it, whatever its opinions or its institutions may be.

Let the eye of a false orthodoxy and a narrow exegesis refuse if they will to read the proclamation of liberty in the Divine message of the Gospel; the whole volume repudiates their rash assertions. At the base, along the front, on the summit of the majestic edifice raised by the Christ, everywhere there shines the word at which degraded humanity rejoices—Liberty!

Christianity is the immortal seed of liberty here below.

Whatever political opinions a man or a people may hold, religion, if they be Christians, should bring them back sooner or later to the doctrine of liberty.

Jesus Christ, the benefactor of nations, as of individuals, has irrevocably established in human societies the reign of law and that of liberty, which in fact are one and the same. That the future is secure to them we will not doubt; and we may continue to hope, as much as the moral condition of humanity

will allow, for a living society, instead of a dead one.

In a temporal point of view liberty is the dower that the religion of Christ has brought to States: a dower payable in many ways, and not yet entirely paid, but of which humanity on the very day of wedlock touched a portion on account; and by a providential coincidence, the barbarians, whose invasion synchronised so marvellously with that of the new faith, were in no way socialists. If the sentiment of personal independence which swelled in their breasts was not identical with that individuality which can only exist as a creation of God, at least it was not opposed to it, and the two had many points in common.

The Gospel has been unintentionally calumniated when charged with inspiring apathetic resignation. Let facts reply. The liberty of modern times is entirely Christian; religion itself is a liberty. Christianity is a burning leaven cast by Divine goodness into the mass of the world. Was it, peradventure, in despite of Christianity that so much energy, invention, political and intellectual activity, characterised the leading nations of the West at the epoch of their greatest religious fervour? Those who speak thus of the religion of Jesus Christ know nothing about the subject. When they have studied it with half the attention they bestow on a chimerical theory, or on the comparative merit of free trade and protection, they will see that religion, that axis of the moral

world, has, like every axis, two poles—submission and liberty, activity and resignation, dignity and humility, ardour and patience, the present and the future, the visible and the invisible, the ideal and the positive, the inhabitant of earth and the inheritor of heaven.

Ever since the world's early days the battle has been going on between servitude and liberty. Sixty centuries are but one great day during which the antagonists have only taken a few moments' rest. The victory has been secured to liberty ever since the great chief of humanity placed Himself at the head of that sacred battalion, whose strength lies far more in the blows it receives than those it gives.

Liberty requires a religious basis ; it is difficult, not to say impossible, to give it any other which is rational and firm. All social truths, properly included, are in the same case ; religious truth is the only firm foundation for any of them.

Liberty is perhaps less easy to organise than victory ; to moralise it is still more difficult.

↙ We have a confession to make ; we are not yet able to comprehend how France, with such a mass of liberty as she has chosen to burden herself withal, will be able securely to tread her precipitous way so long as religion shall not have laid firm hold upon the souls of her citizens ; and for a people without faith, we can conceive no repose, no check except despotism. Only think of it a little : so much liberty and no belief ! the consciousness of rights separated from that of

duties!) so much of interest, so little of affection! What a combination! what risks! what a future! Neither need any try by way of reassuring themselves to quote similar cases; there are only alarming parallels to be found. Liberty without faith has made nations crumble away; and if at the present time there are free people who can support their freedom, who enjoy it, who find in it the incessant renewal of their vigour, and who have nothing to fear from it, these are people that believe. Everything convinces us that French liberty is precarious; that it is threatened by itself; that it will neither be able to consolidate nor govern itself so long as it cannot oppose to the experiments made by ambitious men of every class, to whom so wide a career is opened by the state of things and minds, the cohesion of an enlightened and truly civilised people, united in a community of moral conviction. (Written in 1832.)

God protector of liberty. (See Jeremiah xxxiv.)

As there is no public spirit except in countries where individuals are not excluded from all participation in the administration of society, so the religious spirit can only develop itself powerfully under the auspices of liberty.

Facts, I am well aware, have placed religion in opposition to liberty. The apparent alliance of Christianity with despotism has established in the general mind the most deplorable prejudice, and the past has in this respect continually laboured to impoverish the

future. But the two parts of human truth tend to reunite, and they will do so; neither the facts of yesterday nor those of to-day weaken this hope in me. Man will no longer be internally divided on this subject, nor will society be at variance with herself; and if in all time the best friends of religion have been the best friends of liberty too, the time will doubtless come when men will not think themselves obliged to mistrust religion in proportion as they love liberty. But unfortunate legatees that we are, we groan under the weight of the obligations that our ancestors have bequeathed to us; may our posterity, on the contrary, enjoy the possessions that we have accumulated for them!

Society will only be thoroughly alive and beautiful in proportion as an increasing majority shall have individually accepted and harmonised these two tendencies, towards order and towards liberty. But we must not suppose that two principles can reconcile themselves, or dispense with a *third principle*, which harmonises by comprehending them both. In order to love the two distinct things called order and liberty, and to love the one in the other, we must love something higher than order and liberty, which shall contain the two, and be their living unity. All other harmony is impossible and chimerical.

For us, however, obedience is not a means, but an end; not a part of progress, but progress itself. No principle now-a-days is less in favour than this, and hence the principle of liberty declines, for the two

are narrowly united, and when the one has vanished nothing will remain of the other but a name. And where is obedience to be learnt now? Nowhere, if it be not in the family—the type at once of religion and the State; the school of the citizen and the Christian; the common centre of two lives; the wondrous institution without which all others, either higher or wider, seem impossible.

Liberty is but the beginning of the undertaking, the pedestal of the statue, the basis and condition of obedience. Liberty is the means, the obedience of the heart and the will is the end; liberty is necessary in order to obey; without liberty obedience cannot exist, there is no purpose in the word. But if liberty has neither meaning nor end except through obedience, the two are correlative ideas; they are, as it were, the two poles of one axis; and we can only assert that God glorifies Himself in the creation of a free being, while presupposing that the free being will use his liberty to obey God.

It is alike by the heart that we are free and that we obey. Do not speak of an obedience with which the heart has nothing to do; speak boldly, on the contrary, of an obedience of which the heart bears the whole expense, when any other way of obeying is become impossible.

There is no true enmity, no real and profound divergence of views, except between the good and the wicked. These are, in point of fact, the two parties into which the world is divided. All the first class at

bottom wish the same thing; all the second have the same designs. All worthy liberals desire order; all worthy conservatives desire liberty; and conversely, all bad men, under whatever banner you may find them ranged, mortally hate both liberty and order.

Liberty draws her whole dignity and value only from her union with obedience. A liberty that does not obey is a pure non-sense, for it is in order to obey that we are free.

The spirit of submission and the spirit of independence, alike well applied, are the two elements that compose the perfection of social life. The man that knows not how to submit is unfit for society, and so is the man who cannot resist; he who can do both is the truly social being.

Order in society is but another name for justice, reason, and law; tyranny is the sovereign disorder.

Men will doubtless, according to their era, and also according to their own character, now insist more upon what regulates the movement, and now more upon the movement itself; but whoever loves order without loving liberty, does not really love order; and whoever loves liberty without loving order, does not really love liberty.

The man who reveres nothing is not a social being. Societies that exaggerate the principle of liberty, or replace the law of right by the law of number or of force, perish or degrade themselves by the absence of all reverence. Despotism, where man is not re-

vered as man, and where power is so much the less honoured as it is the more dreaded, commit the same fault, and undergo the same chastisement. But all other reverence is bound up with reverence for God, which is the supreme reverence. Religion and reverence are one and the same ; and in every sphere one of these terms may replace the other. It is inconsistent to revere anything when we do not revere God ; and this inconsistency, possible as an individual exception, is impossible as a rule. All true reverence is abolished in a society where God—the very reason or principle of reverence—is not revered. I may add, that what man in such a society reverences least and despises most, is man ; and here, indeed, he is rational. But this is as terrible as rational. There is still something to hope from a being who reverences himself, whatever he may have done ; there is everything to fear from one who at bottom despises himself. And how should man not despise himself if separated from God ?

Impartiality and moderation are always blamed for being reactionary.

He who would derive obedience from Christianity may easily do so ; nor need he who seeks to deduce liberty therefrom find any greater difficulty : both alike are to be found there, and indeed how should they not ? But party spirit mutilates truth by only conceding to it one pole ; and it is evident that the half of a truth is an error ; that a thesis apart from its counterpoise is necessarily perverted ; that certain

juices, separated from the element that tempers them, change from a wholesome beverage to poison ; that liberty isolated from order is no longer liberty but anarchy, and ere long tyranny ; that order detached from liberty is order no longer, but supreme disorder. We cannot raise relative ideas to absolute without beholding them annihilated by their very triumph. But those blind ones who cannot see such simple truths as these, or those worthless ones whose interest it is not to see them, have never more than one of two words on their lips ; they only tolerate in a doctrine the element that is serviceable to them ; they will not understand how a system or a religion should claim to combine the two solutions ; and following the preconceptions of their own mind, they reject or embrace that religion or that system for love of one only of its principles, or in hatred of one only of its elements.

For the world, liberty springs from itself, and submission does the same ;—false and fatal genealogy this, in virtue of which liberty is but licence, and submission cowardice. For the Christian, on the contrary, submission springs from liberty ; that is to say, being delivered from human fears he freely makes to charity all the sacrifices it requires ; for the Christian too, liberty is the offspring of submission, because, being the servant of God, he is slave to no man, and even when obeying some human order, it is virtually God whom he obeys.

(Christians hold in their own hands the solution of

the social problem and the double principle of liberty and obedience both. This, in a social point of view, is the salt with which they are to salt the earth. If in other times they have taught liberty to the world, they have now got to teach it obedience.)

(2.) *Different Liberties: Religious and other Liberty—Liberty of Conscience, Worship, of the Press—Tolerance and Intolerance.*

It is only those to whom the *duties* of conscience are immaterial who take little trouble to inquire into its *rights*.

To whatever party we may belong, we must allow liberty of conscience to be a great moral idea, an idea linked with the most elevated conceptions of philosophy; and he who is able to make it prevail ought to be numbered amongst eminent moralists.

The respect for conscience is a religious sentiment. We must be ourselves religious to reverence the religion of others; and the more religion we have, the more we shall revere it.

He who does not find the supremacy of conscience in the Gospel is sure to find persecution there.

If religious beliefs be not self-evident, that is to say, if their falsity or their truth be not of a nature to strike of itself the mind that considers them, it certainly results that opposite opinions, be they what they may, equally lack this self-evident character,

for their self-evidence would necessarily imply the falsity of the former. And if these contrary opinions lack this self-evident character, what right have they to lay their yoke upon the religious beliefs with which they do not agree?

Whatever idea we may form of political association, and the bases of its administration, liberty of conscience and cult always remains out of the question; for whatever the hypothesis, it is impossible to conceive the least relation between political science and that of the infinite; between politics and the faith of the heart; between the police and the conscience. It is only in the depths of the conscience that the right of individualism begins—an absolute exclusive right, which is only responsible to God.

All other liberty consists in freedom to do (within the limits of order and of the laws) *what pleases us*, what is agreeable to us, what affords us some enjoyment or profit, or what, at all events, we believe capable of affording these. Religious liberty is the liberty to do *what pleases God*, or, at least, what we believe pleases Him; it is the liberty of serving Him, of fulfilling our duty, not only when it is agreeable to us, but disagreeable; in a word, it is the liberty of obeying. It is a disinterested liberty,—the only disinterested, and consequently the noblest of all.

This liberty is not like other liberties. It is dear to those who avail themselves of it; others it displeases. Nay, I will go further. I have as yet met with few people who did not feel some impatience

at seeing the Deity adored in a manner to which they were themselves unaccustomed: this always vexes, I know. We must either be very reasonable or very conscientious not to feel tempted to impose silence on those who permit themselves to think differently from us on such subjects as these.

What is proclaiming liberty of conscience but the declaring that religious conviction is a sphere into which the civil power ought not to penetrate; in other words, the separation of the civil from the spiritual?

Religious liberty is the keystone of the arch; with it everything else falls and crumbles away. In all constitutions whatever, it is the seal, the mark of true liberalism; it indicates the highest degree of civilisation and the triumph of moral ideas. Wherever it is wanting, we much doubt whether liberty be either understood or loved.

Religious liberty is not only a right, but an imperious necessity of human nature; it is a law before it passes into laws. National codes may proclaim, may register; they do not make it. They may oppress it, but can never destroy.

To conquer consciences by terror, to strike them by hope, or to mislead them by falsehood, are equally grave outrages against Him who has created these consciences, and reserved to Himself the empire over them. It is a sacrilegious crime to place either an individual or a mass of men under the alternative of renouncing temporal advantages or denying their

consciences. And the always merely apparent unity procured by these means is an impious unity.

The early reformers may perhaps have laboured unsystematically, but they did not, they could not leave any precepts that forbade their first plan from being altered ; and if they have not expressly guaranteed religious liberty with all its consequences, they have done even more than this, for their work is the living proclamation of the principles upon which that liberty rests.

It is not so slight a thing as you may imagine to abandon the cause of religious liberty ; it is to renounce all liberties at once.

Liberty of conscience is not only the faculty of choosing between one religion and another, it is also essentially the right of adopting none, and remaining a stranger to all forms and establishments that the religious sentiment may have introduced into society. This notion is inseparable from the idea of *liberty*. Liberty is the right to appreciate by and of ourselves, to weigh (*librare*), and to choose. Now this right no longer exists where, out of different systems, you are compelled to choose one.

Liberty of conscience is our right to establish our relations with duty, in the way that we hold to be the most fitting. It is the right of allowing no other judge of this intellectual and moral intercourse except our own conscience. It is the right to choose between believing and not believing ; between adoring and not adoring. It is the perfect

independence of the social man in matters of belief and religious profession.

The nations that enjoy religious liberty will always prevail over the rest. There is an active and universal stimulant in the sentiment of liberty which enhances man's courage by elevating him in his own eyes. There results from it a moral energy and a vivacity of thought which render man eminently qualified for the cultivation of all the advantages with which nature has surrounded him. This is doubtless one of the causes of the prodigious development of commerce and industry in certain Christian countries.

There is a natural and permanent league between the adversaries of one liberty and the antagonists of the other. Their alliance is established beforehand: it may manifest itself more clearly at certain epochs, but it was founded upon the nature of things.

From Christian liberty is deduced an obligation upon all powers and all persons, calling themselves Christian, to respect liberty of conscience, not only in Christians, but in those who are not yet so.

How can religious liberty be a question for Christians? But let us lay aside Christianity and its doctrines, and ask how those who have the faintest idea of what religion means, those who in principle at least place the glory of God and the interest of eternity above everything else, can help revolting against those gross ideas which degrade heavenly things to the level of human, and wish to submit to

the inspection of a secular police the outpouring of our religious feelings, the expression of our celestial hopes, and the communion of our prayers ?

It is the glory of Christianity, it is the sign of a general advance in the understanding of the Gospel, that its disciples should be found in the first rank of the defenders of religious liberty.

When a cult shall be neither a deception nor a seduction it will have the assent of the most philosophic minds, which, being no more able than the people at large to evade the laws of an organisation common to the whole human race, need, as the rest of us, a religion that supports us. The primitive Church, with all its simplicity, did not reject all solemn rites, its Head having traced a rule for it in this particular, by instituting the Holy Communion, which contains the authorisation and all the elements of a public cult.

The liberty of conscience once fully admitted, it would be inconsistent and contradictory not equally to admit the liberty of worship, which is the immediate application and first use made of it.

Liberty of conscience is nothing without liberty of cult.

Religion, taken in its purity, is a feeling that seeks to extend itself by sympathy. If it do **not** penetrate hearts, it is nothing ; if it merely subject a certain extent of country to certain consecrated forms, it has gained little indeed ; but if it has won our minds and souls, then it has all its claims satisfied, and

reigns indeed. Now, what is it that it requires for this? Nothing more than liberty to plead its own cause and produce its titles. Confident of its own valid claims, it only requires the opportunity of setting them forth in the eyes of all: it does not even exact that inimical voices should be hushed; it is its interest that all opinions should be expressed as freely as its own, knowing that there is no true faith without conviction, nor conviction without examination, nor examination without comparison. It asks therefore only for what all opinions equally require, liberty, and thus believes itself sufficiently protected.

If liberty of conscience be the right of the individual, *liberty of worship* is the right of communities. It is the power they demand of assembling under the guarantee of publicity, and the protection of the law in order to carry out the services of the religion they have chosen, and to maintain by these common celebrations the common faith and zeal.

Political liberty only attains its whole value as guarantee and rampart of civil liberty.

The liberty of the press will work out its own destiny single-handed. Born later than any other, though at its own appointed hour, it is none the less natural, nor less providential, nor less necessary, nor less indestructible than other liberties. Having entered elementally into the life of civilised nations, nothing can ever expel it thence. We need not, in order to defend it, assert that it does no harm; a liberty which does no harm is almost a contradiction in terms;

liberty is innocent in God alone. The liberty of the press does harm, no doubt ; perhaps it will go on doing less and less, but it will always do some. Other liberties, long removed from the pale of discussion, have also had in their time very baneful consequences ; there is not one of which the suppression might not have been demanded under the same plea. It is far better to trust to Providence, which, in the moral as in the physical world, has, in preparing necessities, provided beforehand their place in the general order ; for just as there cannot be a right contrary to right, so there can be no necessity contrary to a necessity. That which is necessary is good, and will finally be recognised as such. Instead of declaiming against a liberty that bad men make a bad thing, let us on our part make it a good one.

If ever toleration can find a noble opportunity for exerting itself, it is towards the intolerant.

The word toleration, moreover, is very admirable when it describes the disposition of the charitable man to endure in others, doctrines or conduct that he himself condemns. This virtue, like all other virtues, is a sacrifice, since its effect is to leave in existence what we would fain see destroyed. And it follows clearly, that this virtue is beautiful in proportion as the sacrifice is great ; that is to say, as our principles are strong, and our beliefs vital. The unbelieving and the indifferent would not, it appears to me, have either any difficulty or any merit in being tolerant ; and yet they are not always,

and, moreover, cannot easily be so, since they have no room for abnegation in the matter. As to States, since they are not individual personalities, or moral beings, they cannot have virtues, and *toleration* on their part is only a political measure which but half satisfies the claims of society.

Toleration is an insufficient palliative, a remedy concealed in the depths of generous hearts in times of fanaticism and oppression; but its presence announces the absence of liberty, and its name, however fair it may seem, is an insult to the rights of humanity. Woe to the people where one is reduced to preach and to invoke toleration! Formerly that word, pronounced by philosophers, heard complacently by kings, might make a sweet and consoling impression on the souls of men, but now-a-days it no longer suffices, and the public conscience, grown more exacting, will only listen to the word *liberty*.

Philosophers have appeared to believe that infidelity is naturally tolerant, and inclined to respect religious liberty, as well as liberty of thought in general. I, on the contrary, believe it to have a great tendency towards intolerance: the enemies of positive religion may, indeed, in times when their own free-thinking is threatened, raise their voice with that of the champion of religious independence; between these two parties, however, there is only a community of perils, not of principles, and the majority of deists and indifferentists are then defending not the interest of society, but their own.

Their impatience at the manifestations of a positive faith, their clamour against undertakings in which charity combines with piety, their bitterness against all eminently religious men, may enable us to guess what their actions would be if on some unhappy day power fell to their share. On this head we have gained our experience, and have nothing more to learn.

If there be a formidable intolerance, it is that of incredulity, or of dead faith. We have seen (and we have groaned over it) Christian communities condemning men, *although* they cast out devils in the name of Jesus; we shall see infidels and formalists condemn others just *because* they cast out devils in this name. Tolerant to indifference and lukewarmness, they reserve their intolerance for zeal and living faith. And—singular fact—this is not because they believe themselves possessed of the deposit of truth and the real rule of morals, but, on the contrary, because they feel that they lack these, and cannot bear others to possess a treasure of which they have deprived themselves.

The Gospel has its own intolerance, although it does not sympathise with persecutors, and breathes the most complete religious liberty; the Gospel, we say, has its intolerance, since it holds as a foe whoever is not its friend.

How often have I seen, bearing the burden and heat of the day, and bending beneath his Saviour's cross, a man to whom intolerance would hardly

grant the title of Christian! Wrestling with old foibles so hard to uproot, bent by the habits of a busy life, retaining the visible impress of the chains that once bound him, and inveterate manners and customs still betraying the old man, nevertheless, he had heard the call of grace, and, according to the measure of strength given him, he was travelling out of this "valley of the shadow of death" by a steep and painful path, wet by his sweat and his tears.

Jesus is the most tolerant of beings, because He is the most holy.

(3.) *Social Questions: Equality and Christianity—
Property—Rich and Poor.*

Society should tend to realise between men all such equality as is consistent with justice; equality, if not this, is at bottom inequality, for what is called *equality* would be better named *proportion*. All inequalities which are at once artificial, arbitrary, useless, and excessive, may be regarded as evils, and we ought to consider it a good that each one here below should be all that he is qualified for being.

Christianity agrees with natural philosophy and rational politics in demanding, if not as a very great advantage for those interested therein, at least as essentially conformable to the idea of justice, the employment of all means not spoliatory or inimical to the fundamental laws of human nature, which appear adapted to lead each man, by means of work,

to the greatest amount of prosperity consistent with the measure of his strength and the nature of his faculties.

Human equality, according to the idea that we instinctively attach to it, is a still ruder thing than human justice, itself so desperately rude. If the question regard happiness (as it ought), it is impossible to make the shares equal, impossible to measure them. Thus, in respect to equality or inequality, we can but deal with material well-being, the only one that is pursued, aimed at, coveted by all alike. This kind of happiness is susceptible of proof and measurement. The question is to know whether society should apply itself to rendering all its members equal in this particular. We believe that society, which, were it still theoretic or philosophical, would have another end in view, cannot, from the standpoint to which it reduces itself, avoid gravitating towards an order of things in which the industrious man shall never want the necessaries of life, and where the desire of a better condition, when favoured inwardly by the faculties of the individual who feels it, shall no more meet outwardly—that is, in social institutions—with invincible obstacles.

We may represent to ourselves a partisan of equality and a champion of liberty as reaching the same moral elevation. Both these ideals may be loved with a savage love and in a spirit most hostile to civilisation; but if we consider these two pursuits, these two affections, as exemplified in history, the

one appears nobler than the other, and there is no reciprocal solidarity between them. The love of liberty is not generally united with the sentiment of envy; the love of equality is often only its expression or its disguise. The pursuit of liberty leads to that of equality; the love of equality may ally itself with the hatred of liberty. The equality that is possible under despotism is one of the consolations (shall I say one of the charms?) of the slavery of such a rule. Civil liberty, less ardently desired by many than political, in every case demands the latter as its guarantee and complement.

Political liberty might be more justly called a power, and then the stern *moments* of the political well-being of individuals, considered with reference to the whole, would be liberty, power, and equality. Let us, however, preserve to the two first—we may do so without inconvenience—the common name of liberty.

A minimum of liberty, a minimum of equality, are essential; no political society is endurable, or even conceivable, without a certain degree of both. Society itself, as society, is the consecration of the two. But neither the plenitude of both, nor even the highest degree of liberty and equality compatible with the existence of society, can be presented as absolute truths independent of time and circumstance. What in these respects is just and good, and consequently true, at any given epoch, was not so at a preceding epoch. Apart from the minimum

of which we have spoken, and which to us appears determined by the eternal and inviolable right that each man has to be a man, there only remains a relative truth. Full liberty, complete equality, may be at certain times revoltingly unjust and false.

(Property, society, liberty, three terms closely united; each is comprised in the other two, and each comprehends or implies the other two.)

There are two such different ways of receiving the doctrine of equality, that, according to the one, it is indeed equality that you wish and seek for, while according to the other, it is, on the contrary, really inequality.

The double desire of ruling and being ruled seems to be more ancient, and to lie deeper, than the desire to be *equal*.

To whom, in point of fact, have we got to prove human equality? To none, for all the world believe in it. But to whom must we teach the love of this principle, the practice of this truth? To all the world.

The important thing to ascertain is not whether equality triumphs in opinions and laws, but whether it triumphs in men's hearts; if it be loved for its truth and holiness; loved with a pure and religious affection.

Sin, which I allow renders inequalities hurtful, and perhaps exaggerates them, is not, however, their *principle*. So soon as one man is born with more talent and in more favourable circumstances than another (and this depends on the will of God), that man

possesses means of outstripping and surpassing others. Hence inequalities of every kind. Since they are the works of God, it does not belong to us to blame them, and it is impossible that they should be evil.

By Divine appointment there is in this world of ours, bread for all hunger, clothes for all nakedness, a consoler for every affliction, a satisfaction for every want : the balance would have been exact if we had not disturbed it; it is not God who is in fault, it is ourselves. He had only instituted or permitted inequality in order to give us room constantly to remove or soften it. Even without removing it, there is, here below, life and happiness for all; but instead of placing the whole happiness of individuals in their own personal position, and making it depend upon their free will, God has placed a portion of it in the hearts of others. God has willed that we should be mutually indebted to each other. He has laid on the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the learned and the ignorant, a necessity for meeting, for seeking each other out. He has decreed that the re-establishment of the equilibrium should be our work; it was not He who disturbed it, but He has left us the choice between restoring or disturbing it still further. I know well that it is disturbed. In departing from God man has departed from his fellow-man; charity does not proportionately fill up the gaps left by distress; the abundance of these — abundance, I mean, of every kind — does not supply the destitution of those, so that there is

on earth far more misery than God willed there should be.

The grand leveller is Christian love.

The Christian consents to inequality, but it is equality that is sacred in his eyes. In this sense he goes farther than the worldly man most zealous for equality. For if in those who have received more graces than he, he honours remarkable monuments of the power of God, he also humbles himself before those whom he has outstripped.

There is an essential equality between men; the Gospel consecrates it. There are accidental but necessary inequalities between them; these the Gospel accepts. Or rather, let us say that the heart of the Christian loves this equality and consents to these inequalities.

All love proceeds from some joy; the love of equality from the joy of salvation.

The principle of equality weakens with the religious sentiment, just as that sentiment weakens when it is left to itself; but when God powerfully protects religious ideas, when He renders Himself present and sensible to a people to such a point that the whole existence of that people is, as it were, interpenetrated with religion, then there is nothing to fear for the principle of equality. A religious people will always pay it homage; and the feeling of equality that it entertains will always be proportioned to its sentiment for God;—for the same reason that all haughtiness is brought low in God's presence, all high things

bow down, and all lowly things are exalted, in an order of things where everything is done in the presence and name of God, and where God manifests Himself by miracles and by special protection.

In the absence or contempt of religion, nothing remains to protect human dignity and the principle of equality, but an instinct which is too vague, and a sentiment which is too feeble, to make head against a pride which becomes ferocious when it is not dominated.

The sentiment of human equality is always in exact proportion with the sentiment of God's presence; because we want a basis for man's respect for man, and this basis can be no other than God, and it is not possible, because not just, to continue to reverence man when one has ceased to reverence God.

We claim purely and simply for every man the right to be man; and here it is that we find the long-sought principle of human equality.

We are equal, in that we are equally subject as men to one supreme law; a law more necessary, more essential to our human condition, than the very necessity of dying.

What real and essential difference can we imagine between two creatures who, both equally and without any intermediate agency, correspond with God? And what inequality can we imagine between them if not that of obedience?

Christians are not first equals and then brothers; they are first brothers, and then, because they are brothers, they are equals.

A coarse notion of commerce leads us to believe that the gain of one party of necessity involves a loss for the other: an idea injurious to the providence of God—an idea which can only have sprung from the decline of primitive faith—an idea which at its very origin is a sin! The progress of intelligence has already begun to dispel these prejudices, and to draw peoples nearer to each other; but instruction can no more do everything in one direction than ignorance can in another; and just as ignorance would not have sufficed to isolate nations if, in the sentiment of God's fatherhood, they had found that of their mutual brotherhood, so science is unable, merely by connecting men through their interests, to make them truly and in their hearts neighbours one of another. Interest and good sense do not suffice to create that universal fraternity that no external cause could have destroyed or weakened, if the internal and Divine principle on which it was founded had not first of all been overthrown in the heart of man.

The Gospel nowhere tells us that men are equal: a truth that it doubtless does not deny, but which, as it were, it ignores, so much is it beneath the point of view and the spirit of Christ. But it tells us that we are members of one body, all accepted, all necessary, all subordinated to the same Master, in whom is found the principle of our common life.

For a large number of those whom we continue through habit to call members of the social body,

there is a great deal of isolation, and society, as far as they are concerned, is very much like a desert. It is necessary that society, under the auspices of an enlightened charity, should more and more become a living and spontaneous force, and that the most unfortunate should at last be able to feel that they do in fact belong to it, as limbs belong to the body. We are tending, it seems to me, to this result, and I believe that we shall eventually reach it. The solidarity of all with respect to all, that Christian idea that certain seek coarsely to parody, is gradually penetrating all consciences, and when once conviction and honest will are present, is it likely that means should always fail ?

Even without philosophy, the most simple observers may assert, putting the extremes on both sides out of the question, that poverty has charms wealth never knew ; the number and facility of enjoyments are compensated by their keenness ; farther removed from the gifts of fortune, poverty remains closer to those of nature ; to it alone the intimate sweetnesses of family life disclose their whole secrets, exhale all their perfumes ; in default of other treasures, those of love open out more widely ; hearts are nearer to each other in a narrow dwelling ; less diverted, less called away by the world, one gives oneself up more undisturbedly to duties that are delights ; mutual services, less facile, but more direct, more personal, are also better appreciated. Baucis and Philemon were "happy not to owe to a domestic the pleasure

or obligation of the attention they mutually paid each other." This is not romance, but history ; but that which is above both history and romance is the declaration of eternal truth, which has openly given the preference to the condition of the poor.

There is an enmity, secret or open—but at all events necessary—between the poor and the rich ; not because these are rich and those poor, but because they are all men, and "shapen in iniquity." This is the only reason why this inequality should be a disorder, and this has been the cause of its excess. But for this unfortunate moral condition, wealth and poverty, confined within proper limits, would both alike be blessings under two forms. The Gospel, which has not disguised from us to which of these states the greatest danger attaches, has afforded means to neutralise in both the venom that corrupts them : the rich Christian oppresses, offends, despises no one ; the poor Christian knows neither impatience nor envy ; and each, without formally changing situations, realises the touching aspect of society inaugurated by that expression of Jesus Christ, "The poor ye have with you always." The world holds another language ; it says to the rich, "The poor ye have always against you ;" and to the poor, "The rich shall always be against you." Thus the rich corrupts the poor, and the poor repays him in kind, till we hardly know with which the initiative lies.

(Property, which has served as the basis of gradual

civilisation, is also the foundation of individual improvement. We attach ourselves to the fruits of our labours; we respect ourselves in our undertakings; self-esteem becomes a fortune that we will not throw away; it brings with it the craving for the esteem of others; and thus, from a little ease of circumstance, a little *having*, moral habits which profit the whole community spring up in the individual. /

It does not belong to all, nor is it expedient in every case to give free scope to an indignation that falls directly on, and stops short at, one particular class of society. If it be neither judicious nor generous to preach the duties of the poor to the rich, it is scarcely more so to preach the duties of the rich to the poor.

3. *Manifestation of our Convictions.*

(1.) *Definition—Necessity of Manifestation.*

Conviction is but the submission of the mind after a certain conflict, its decision after a period of uncertainty.

No truth is more completely our own possession, or becomes more entirely part of ourselves, than one that we have long combated. To be convinced is to be vanquished.

To manifest our religious conviction is to draw from our soul, in order to produce it in broad daylight, what that soul contains of most secret and profound; what in every situation, public and pri-

vate, is of least immediate and least *actual* interest, and yet is that whose manifestation most compromises the repose of our life.

When an opinion is of importance in men's eyes generally, or merely in the judgment of those among whom we are placed, whatever the degree of importance it may have in our own sight, it yet behoves us spontaneously to declare and frankly to profess our ideas thereupon.

We owe religious truth to our brethren as soon as ever we know it—we are debtors here in the strictest sense of the term,—for truth, properly understood, is no one's private property. An advantage that may be communicated without loss to the possessor must not remain exclusively his. If this proposition be not true the whole of morality is nought.

Everything stands or falls by this. That which we do not believe ourselves obliged, and feel ourselves impelled, to spread abroad, is no conviction.

He who does not respect and honour the truth that is in him has no moral sense; he who denies the truth before man inwardly despises it.

The proper time to speak truth is just so soon as we know it, for it always appears at its own appointed hour, and we have not the power of speaking premature truths; indeed, it is not we who give these truths to our age, it is our age from which we receive them; so that when one of them breaks upon our minds, we may boldly utter it, without fear of being premature.

In many cases, to have spoken is to have done nothing, because in many cases speaking has no consequences attached to it, and is little more than an opening through which the courage for action evaporates and gets lost; and to have spoken is to have done nothing in all cases where it is evident to the public that we might have both acted and spoken at once. To speak without acting, when acting is possible, is the refuge of semi-convictions and semi-courage.

Were we the only ones to be true, we are bound to be so. This duty is individual, independent of circumstances, proportioned only to itself, and expects its sanction and its opportunity from no one particular condition of humanity. Like virtue, or moral truth taken in its generality, it neither grows nor diminishes with prevalent manners and customs; immortal type that it is, it measures everything, society and the individual both, with itself, and its claims are subject to no deduction.

If Solon proclaimed as a bad citizen whoever in the midst of civil discords refused to take a part, society, no less severe, sees in every man who maintains an obstinate silence on the subject that engages its attention to be a bad citizen of the republic of minds.

Even if want of courage had more excuses than it has, the duty of one who holds the truth is to speak it with or without hope; is not to allow to events merely, the honour of demonstrating or en-

forcing it; is not to permit that, introduced by necessity as by an ignorant midwife, it should come into the world still-born, instead of alive and vigorous. Whoever inclines to leave truth alone, to fare as she may, is no friend of hers; he does more than hate, he denies her: for if truth be only proved by facts, if it have no other sanction than utility, it has neither sanction nor proof, and we may even say that, being entirely relative, retaining no longer anything absolute, it is no longer truth.

Every conviction that we fear or disdain to manifest, is unworthy of the name; for if conscience do not urge us to make it known, what proof have we that conscience presided at its birth? or, if it did so, what kind of conscience is that which believes itself bound to a truth, compelled to accept it, and yet does not feel its obligation to profess or even to confess it?

If we were at liberty to keep all the rest of our thoughts to ourselves, those that we entertained respecting religion could not remain our secret; for our conviction on these subjects so profoundly and practically qualifies us, that society only knows what we really are in relation to her, by what she knows us to be in relation to God.

Sincerity and candour in the profession of religious doctrines is for society a test of moral health; so long as this virtue be held in honour, all moral convictions are safe; but with the dissimulation of religious thought, will come in rapid succession, dog-

matic and moral indifferentism, the preference of the expedient to the right, and finally the complete demolition of moral ideas.

Both as to religion, feeling, and doctrines, what a man does not say is more characteristic and more important to us in forming a judgment of him than all that he does say. Silence is in general more significant than words; we believe little, believe ill, and hardly love at all what we are content to keep always unspoken.

To retain truth captive is to retain God himself in captivity; it is to cheat those to whom He belongs as much as to us; it is to hinder His being spread abroad in the hearts of men; it is to steal away the bread of him who is dying of hunger. All other refusals may have their reason and find their excuse; there is neither excuse nor reason for the refusal of the truth. We do not in all cases owe bread to men, but in all we owe them truth.

We may conceive a sincere conviction remaining silent, but not of its making a right, still less a duty, of silence. To whosoever with deliberate purpose keeps truth a prisoner, we are authorised to say that he does not possess it; the religious conviction which refuses to express, by that alone disavows itself; it is not convinced, and a religion that should (I do not say enjoin, but) permit silence would have thereby pronounced its own condemnation; I should know it to be false from that one sign.

In the silence of a believer we recognise at once

either a lack of affection or of conviction, and in each case alike an absence of religion; for true religion should at once give happiness and touch the heart.

In vain should we seek to persuade ourselves that the interests of truth would be better served by sacrificing a portion of it in order to remain united with our brethren, than by separating ourselves from them in order to retain truth in its entirety. A perverse reasoning, an infidel suggestion this! for, in the first place, what certifies you that, having sacrificed truth on one point, you will not sacrifice it on all others? What do you expect us to discover in this first weakness but the guarantee of a second? You desire by a little dissimulation to be of service to your fellow-creatures, but of all services that you can possibly render them, the greatest is the one you withhold; the greatest is to teach them that conscience goes for something, that is to say, that it is everything; and as you can only teach this in action—as any other mode of instruction will glide over the surface of their souls like a blunted dart over a polished cuirass—you ought eagerly and thankfully to embrace all occasions of rendering homage to conscience, and consequently of very often appearing beside yourselves with the foolishness of Christianity.

Christianity alone has made the publication of his sentiments a duty, and more than a duty, to the believer it is his imperious want, his essential cha-

racteristic; and, urging on to the same end by two parallel ways, giving to proselytism two motives at once, gratitude and charity, it has highly distinguished itself above all other religions, has put itself out of the pale of comparison with these, by the zeal of its partisans in publishing, defending, and propagating their belief.

The Divine Founder of Christianity has consecrated the principle that there is a duty towards truth; that truth itself is holy and precious; that we are at liberty neither to decline its acquirement nor to hold back its expression; that it is the supreme good of the whole world, the good of each man in particular, his right and his duty.

I shall always doubt a conviction that is unaccompanied by peace. I hold that calm is essential to an earnest conviction, as it is to all serious actions and dispositions. Emotion may indeed make the voice tremble, but it will never be the emotion of anger; energy may accent the words and give them a power to thrill, but never passion.

What is earnest is naturally tranquil; and in proportion as our opinions are most serious, they the less compromise our peace. Conscience introduced into our debates will soon soften their asperity and ennoble their character.

The more earnest a belief, the more it measures and counts its words.

It seems as though the manifestation of each one's religious conviction were just that which is

most repugnant to himself, and yet most important to all ; alike that with which society has least to do, and that about which she is most anxious ; what she can best dispense with, and yet dispense with least ; the most extraneous of all things, and yet the most essential to life ; the most external to, and yet the most intimately involved in the affairs of the world.

Strong convictions, of which the object is serious, consequently religious convictions above all, and pre-eminently, if not exclusively, Christian convictions, will prove those which cause the want of independence to reach its highest point of intensity. Indeed, as it seems to us, tenacity, constancy, and heroism in the maintenance of opinion is a loan the world has received from Christianity ; before its appearance how poor and pale human dignity was in this particular !—poor as were the beliefs to which it was reduced to attach itself. With Christianity the principle seems to have been born ; Christian conviction, so full of self-respect, teaches all conviction to respect itself ; the right and the duty of speaking out truth simultaneously assert themselves ; the principle of liberty of conscience passes from religion into philosophy ; Christian martyrs give martyrs to Platonism ; the rights of thought are solemnly inaugurated in the world ; human dignity is completed.

Every time that an individual has an opinion, and feels an obligation spring for him out of the opinion, he has the right to call this opinion *conscientious*, and

no one being able to penetrate into the soul of that man, no one can dispute the appellation he has been pleased to confer.

There can be no right against right, no duty against duty, no necessity against necessity; and if it be the right of an individual to make manifest his belief, it is equally the duty of society to respect that manifestation. Each of these truths implies the other.

(Moral ideas, which are society's true cement,) would dissolve and disappear all at once if ever the day came when it was admitted that conscience, which is their seat, had not the right to manifest itself.

You must not sacrifice one single hair of your brother's head to the very belief for which you would do well to lay down your own life.

(2.) *Manifestation and Enlightenment—Manifestation independent of Perfection—Advantage.*

It has been said that "prior to the duty of obeying our conscience comes that of enlightening it," but it should have been added that true conscientiousness never inverts this order; and under this head we may say, without a paradox, that the man who does not know, but is seeking the truth, is far more in the truth than one who holds but does not love it.

If it be self-evident that we must first have con-

victions before we can express them, it is less evident, but equally true, that in order truly to have them, visibly and energetically to feel their possession, in order that they should live in us, it is essential that they be expressed.

The life of faith is kept up by action, and the better where this action is a sacrifice. If no one thoroughly knows his own thought till he has expressed it, so, too, no one really possesses a conviction till he has manifested it.

God alone sets souls free, and in order to have courage to bring their convictions to light, they must first of all have convictions, have at least a conviction of the duty of frankly manifesting themselves.

Where should we be in the matter of beliefs if we insisted upon their always being guaranteed by the ideal and impossible perfection of those who profess and teach them? What belief could stand this singular test? Nay, I go further; zeal in seeking, spreading, contending for truth is naturally and almost necessarily allied with a passionate character, and such a one is sure to lead to aberrations and excesses. Let us then submit to hear the truth from all mouths, to receive it from all men; it is neither to this nor that human being that it belongs, but to God; and whatever may be the instrument He is pleased to choose, He does so freely, with the view, no doubt, of teaching us to reverence truth for itself, and to exercise our judgment, as

the law, should administer justice, without respect of persons.

We only adhere strongly to what we have been free to deny.

He who is resolved always to obey his conviction carries within him a principle of order which applies to all things; and the fruit, the natural effect of this moral disposition, being to lead to a careful search as to *where* duty lies, it follows that there is almost invariably a faithful correspondence between this sentiment and correct moral notions; and if conscience does happen to misapprehend one, it surrounds all the others with sacred inviolability. Only give me men with consciences, and I will show you a people where union and subordination prevail.

I do not believe in duties without dangers; and the more encompassed with sacrifices an obligation may be, the more imperious does it appear to me. Sacrifice and duty are correlatives. If the profession of our convictions cost us nothing, threatened none of our interests, I should doubt its having been commanded. Nothing is commanded but what may injure, and danger is the seal and sanction of virtue.

In proportion as the storm is greatest, and public indignation most keen, you will find that the truth that grows in your conscience grows also in the public conscience.

A conviction is fortified and sanctified by all that it costs us.

Every relation founded on a voluntary and intentionally prolonged misunderstanding, every fiction matching two souls who at bottom tend towards contrary ends, is derogatory to human dignity.

(3.) *Fictions and Opinions—Effect of Manifestations—
State Church.*

We must remember that on religious subjects everything is better than reticence and legal fiction, and that to attack the truth is also a manner of announcing it.

Every heart sold into bondage to passion contains by anticipation a secret sentence of ostracism against a soul which by its obedience to the internal law is furnished with the privilege of independence.

There are two ways of obtaining peace,—the silence of those who know the truth ; or others allowing it to be uttered, and listening to it.

Between persons enamoured of truth or sincerely resolved to accept it, the free manifestation of beliefs, even though these be diametrically opposed, is on the whole rather favourable than adverse to the cordiality of mutual relations.

It is better to touch, even if we jar, than always to shun each other.

Men used to hide ideas, now-a-days ideas hide men ; this difference may be merely one of opinion, the opinion is a fact, and a powerful one.

Liberty, which I do not make the source of

all social welfare, is, in my opinion, its necessary condition; but the present state of things affords motives for doubt and uneasiness. On one side, political life, by taking us out of ourselves and incessantly blending us one with another, renders our life more superficial in proportion as it extends, communicates, and diffuses it. Now, some degree of solitude is necessary to the formation of strong convictions. Social intercourse, if too frequent and too animated, agitates, raises, holds in solution, and floating within us, elements that require to be stationary in order to combine and crystallise. The meditation necessary to conviction is hardly possible on the public parade where we live. I allude to the press with its myriad publications, and to the newspapers with their contradictory declamations.

All this noise prevents us from hearing the inner voice; or else, by blending with it, it produces in our mind I know not what equivocal results, more properly named opinion than conviction, and often as little personal as possible.

We must not either disguise from ourselves, that in this new social system there is a permanent conspiracy against our individuality; and nothing, indeed, more threatens our internal liberty than the external, in the midst of which we live, and in which we participate. This organised liberty has opened out a road to power for individual ambition; but it is only under the escort of public opinion that

we are able to enter upon this road ; it is this opinion that we must captivate and in a manner formularise ; accordingly we make everything concur to this end : we appeal to hopes and fears ; we intoxicate imagination and self-love ; we stir personal affections ; we act by words and things ; it is true we do not disdain good arguments when wanted, but in a general way we agitate, and it is in calm alone that true convictions are formed and embraced. What is called opinion is little more than personal feeling or preference. Few people are actual proprietors of their opinion ; very few indeed are able to define it to themselves ; very few have, after receiving it from others, appropriated it by reflection. As all existing order rests upon opinion, it behoves us to have one ; we provide ourselves with it as with a house ; we rent our opinion, but we are not responsible for it ; we do not die with its death, for it never formed part of our life, *res perit domino* ; however, we defend it warmly as long as it lives, and this factitious warmth, deceiving him who manifests it to begin with, still more easily deceives lookers on, so that at the very time when there are fewest personal convictions, and when, in this respect, there are no longer individuals, but only masses, the human conscience appears more directly engaged and more active than ever.

Conviction in our time does not sufficiently differ from opinion. It leans too much upon reasoning, not enough upon conscience. Conscience

is too little questioned, too little exercised. Men do not sufficiently appeal to it for the evidence and confirmation of primary truths. Immediate and simple faith is rare.

There is nothing now-a-days that people pique themselves more upon than the having an opinion, nothing that is more bashfully concealed than a conviction.

So long as an opinion remain an opinion, we are wanting both to those who profess it and to ourselves if without due examination we attack it by bold conjectures, by raillery, sarcasm, ridicule; by encouraging all reports that are unfavourable to it; in a word, by running, in mere lightheartedness, the fearful chance of warring against the truth.

Private persons are exercising a real tyranny as to opinions when they judge them without being acquainted with them; when they hamper their manifestation, or in any way whatsoever offend those who profess them. All opinions have a natural right to express themselves freely, and to be examined before they are condemned. This is the only *respect* they exact, or indeed allow.

The novelty of an opinion is never a reason for rejecting it. Our firmest and best-founded beliefs have once been new; and time, while rendering them homage, has not in any way added to their truth.

Truth of character is in the eyes of all the world

a fundamental virtue, and the bond of all other virtues. And were we to ask, not this or that individual, but humanity at large, how far the obligation to be true extends, how high it rises—the answer would be a refusal to assign it any limit.

The courage of conviction lies not only in resisting the influence of numbers, but in withstanding the authority of people who far surpass us in talent and acquirements. If this were not a thing possible, the universe would be given up to the mercy of genius; whereas it is essential to the cause of moral truth, right, and justice, that conscientious convictions should be able to hold their ground against it. There must be somewhere or other an evidence stronger than all the phantoms to which a powerful imagination, or powerful dialectic, may give a false air of truth. Conscience must be fortified, so that the simplest and most ignorant may have a refuge from the tyranny of intellect, and an impregnable position amidst the conquests of science. The internal primordial truths that form part of our nature must not be at the mercy of a syllogism or a quotation.

It is no such slight matter to be in an attitude of contradiction to the rest of men; that is to say, for each one of us to be so in regard to our relations, our town, or our country. This opposition, more particularly if it be calm and persistent, is just what men least readily pardon.

Publicity is in its own sphere what familiarity is

in that of private relations; it accustoms man to man; it tramples under foot many littlenesses; it deprives the cowardice of self-love of many disgraceful refuges; it stamps a more virile character upon our civic life. But has it succeeded in making a duty of that very openness of which it almost makes a necessity? Do we press forward, or only allow ourselves to be dragged into this vivid light? And when we openly manifest our thought, have we not in view rather the consolations of glory than the secret approbation of conscience? In the midst of all these declamations, these protestations, there is the same reserve, the same mystery about all that it is our interest to hide. Underneath the noise, there is the old silence; the soul, as before, is veiled; it betrays itself in its passion, as it always has betrayed, but it does not communicate or shed itself around any more.

If State Churches have not been founded with the view of repressing the free manifestation and free formation of beliefs, it is at all events through hatred of their principle that they are supported at the present time by a large number of their advocates; it is the dread of this principle which gives them credit in the eyes of the crowd; in a word, they exist in antagonism to it. And whatever may be the sentiments of those that uphold these churches, so much is certain, that they constantly repress and deaden this principle; that they constantly cause it, as it were, to miscarry; they crown with honour, they clothe with the conventional authority of time, space, and

number, the twofold servility of imitation and habit; and their *silent* sapping shakes even more and more not only the foundations of true religiousness, but the very basis of human morality; in a word, they completely embody the error which we are opposing.

II.—SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

1. *Relations between the Individual and Society.*

- (1.) *Individuality: Its Definition — Excellence — Inalienable Character — Individuality — Personality — Individualism — Objections.*

Individuality is felt, can be expressed, but does not define itself; nor do the most intimate and involuntary operations of organic life more obstinately elude our analysis.

Individuality is that combination of human qualities which distinguishes one being from all his fellows, and does not allow him to be confounded with any one of them. Despite the simplicity of this definition, individuality is a mysterious something, of which the most subtle analysis can give no exact account. Under all the elements that are named lies something which we cannot name; the former have produced and yet cannot explain it. By this it is that the abstract passes into the concrete, and that common become proper names. We may ask ourselves if individuality be not an imperfection; if a perfect agreement of parts with the whole would not efface individuality; if a being be not individual,

precisely through those qualities which render him less fitted to assimilate himself to the great unity, and to concur with the general harmony? we may inquire whether the idea of moral perfection does not exclude that of individuality, and whether the perfect being be not without any other character than that of perfection? Thus Paul, Peter, John, had each their own character; but we do not speak thus of Jesus. . . . We answer that individuality is not itself an imperfection, but one of the conditions attached to the imperfection of human nature. The perfect being is, so to speak, *one* with his qualities: is lost in them; is abstract and concrete both; is hardly more than the proper name of perfection. Say *Jesus*, or say *love*, you have said one and the same thing. But for all that, we must not imagine that in proportion as a human being advances towards perfection he becomes less individual; on the contrary, he must be so to advance towards that end. A being perfect by nature can dispense with individuality—he has perfection; a being entirely vicious can equally dispense with it—he has his passions. The first is fused with his good qualities, the latter with his vices. A third being, belonging to neither category, needs to find amongst the various elements of his being some one prominent point determining all the rest, and serving as centre and fulcrum, which may make him self-conscious, secure a direction to his will, and a form to his life; for such a one is in the fortunate and unfortunate

situation of being sufficiently determined neither by his virtues nor his vices. Between these two elements individuality comes in.

Individuality is the basis of our peculiar worth ; for in order to be anything we must begin by *being*, or in other words, our qualities must be our own. In this sense individuality is rare ; and we do not exaggerate when we say that most men, instead of living at home, live in other people's dwellings, have, as it were, a lease of their opinions and their morality,—for longer or shorter terms indeed, but this difference goes for nothing. Intelligence and development of mind are not certain guarantees of individuality.

The individuality of the soul and of the mind have different effects ; the latter separated from the former divides and rends. They must be united ; the one to feel, the other to comprehend ; the one to describe, the other to explain ; the one, in short, to complete the other, for how should we understand what we do not feel, or properly explain what we are unable to describe ? Synthesis, too often banished from science, is nevertheless a scientific instrument ; and till lately its absence has constituted the great defect of our histories. Without poetry there can be no exactness.

Individuality only dates from itself, and is only responsible to God ; it is planted in humanity as the plant is in the soil, and like the plant too, it bathes its branches in the nourishing air of heaven.

Individuality receives indeed, but by a force which is within itself, which is its very self, and converts all it receives into its own substance. It inherits, but it accepts; it reproduces, gives in its turn, adds to that common fund which, after all, is formed by the concurrence of individualities, and has drawn nothing from without. For suppress in thought all advances of individual spontaneity, what is left in the general treasury? Absolutely nothing at all.

Individuality may, it is true, succumb beneath numbers, may yield, abdicate; but whatever diminishes it diminishes the man himself, and if the absorption could be complete, the word man would designate merely a material organism furnished with a dialectical apparatus. The two qualities of man and individual are inseparable; the one cannot be lost without the other; and one of our fondest cares, as well as one of the highest problems of education, is to preserve individuality.

Every man must be an individual of some kind, but every man has not got an individuality.

Every mind has probably some ideas of its own; but it is not every mind that can penetrate into its own ideas through the successive layers formed by the ideas of others, or of the world at large, by which our own are always more or less thickly covered. The question, then, is how to get down to our own selves. This kind of artesian well is not to be bored by logic or analysis, which may, indeed, in certain matters lead to truth, but cannot lead to self-dis-

covery. The bore wanted here, and which I hardly know how to name, is something more native and less complicated; it is a certain boldness of mind, and perhaps of character, which does not always belong to the cleverest or most learned, and which, although it do not immediately lead to truth, is nevertheless one of the most precious instruments in this research of it; since before we seek, and in order to seek, we must first have found that *me* which is the agent in the research. We are deeply indebted to all those who have been able to distinguish and recognise their own voice in the midst of that confused medley of so many strange voices, where one's own is so easily lost, till at length it sounds to us the most strange of all.

Individuality may be defined as an indivisible unity,—in this sense, that whatever we detach from it is not a unity, but a simple fragment. Individuality supposes organisation; wherever there is organisation there is individuality. A tree is an individual.

Life, with the consciousness of life, constitutes *personality*. Feeling without thought does not suffice here. We must not only feel that we live; we must know it, be able to tell ourselves that we live. This is why an animal—unless we suppose that it speaks to itself, that is to say, thinks—is not a person.

The fact of personality, less simple than that of life, but equally primitive, is a profound mystery, as are all facts of the same order, I mean of the undervived order.

Personality implies individuality. The personal being is still more fully and energetically individual than the impersonal. Man is more individual than the plant; but he too has ties, and because his existence is more rich, these ties are more numerous; he is dependent, he is united; he is at the same time a whole and part of a whole,—as it were a complete body, which at the same time is a member.

Individuality is inalienable: once developed by contact with his fellows, the individual remains a moral being, having relations of his own with the law of duty, with the Infinite, with God.

The pagan mysteries prove that individuality and community (for since the fall the latter implies the former) required a free scope, that the institutions of public religion did not secure for, nay, did not even allow them.

An individuality has not two editions.

There are impossible sacrifices. There is no aim that can either compensate or justify the sacrifice of moral existence, of individuality.

It is certain that if we too much abstract individuality we deprive ourselves of the most energetic spring of perfectibility, for it is in what he has of individual that the true strength of each man, his moral muscle, resides.

(Each attempt at reform or improvement is individual before it is collective.

Individuality is not individualism. This refers everything to self; sees in all things self only;

individuality consists only in willing to be oneself in order to be something. And doubtless it is better for society that each should be something rather than nothing.

Every separate being does not remain openly and frankly individual, but each brings into the world some portion or other of individuality. Some one has said that "we are born originals and die copies;" and this is but too true. Society has a tendency to assimilate, and consequently to absorb what properly belongs to each of its members, or rather the less vigorous individualities are led to throw their small stock into the common fund. Those who have most are least ready to give. But example, prejudice, interest, all the forces ranged on the side of the majority, easily get the better of more feebly constituted souls. Thus we meet in society with passions, manners, morals, and few characters. Character is too often confounded with passion.

Observe a human being before the levelling machine has passed over him; study, if you have the opportunity, some child directed and not annihilated by that great system of extinction on which men have pleased to bestow the name of education. You will see, even in the least remarkable subjects, the intention of Providence to make each being distinct from all others, a little world in itself; just as, inversely, it has made of humanity at large a collective man, whose years are centuries. If any man has ever borne by unanimous consent the title of *great*, depend

upon it his moral image has engraved itself in the consciousness of all those who have known him, just as a human face stamps itself in the memory of those who have seen it. The men who have most freely given themselves up to the general interest were most certainly all eminently individual, so true is it that individuality is not egotism. Glory has ever been its portion, and cannot indeed be conceived apart from it; for glory appertains only to force, which resides in markedly individual characters alone. A condition of great things in the real world, it is no less so in the domain of art; to find and produce it is the object and the triumph of poetry.

Individualism and individuality are two sworn enemies, the first being the obstacle and negation of all society, the second that to which society owes all it possesses of savour, life, and reality.

Nowhere does individualism prosper more easily than where there is an absence of individuality; and there is no more atomistic policy than that of despotism.

This individuality to which we refer is not that sensitive individuality which commonly takes the name of egotism, or self-love, and to which we should give that of individualism, if that word had not a double meaning. An animal is, equally with man, provided with that kind of individuality which is for both alike a condition of felt existence, and for man the starting point of self-devotion—for he possesses himself in order to be able to give himself away.

The individuality of which we speak, and which alone deserves the name, is that by which a man, similar in a general way to all beings of his species, is, nevertheless, exactly similar to himself only, appropriates what is common to all, and has, both morally and intellectually, the right to say *I*.

Now it is very true that in the actual condition of humanity—that is to say, since the fall—the development of this individuality is the occasion of many divisions in society; but I maintain that it is not their source, and that it would not produce them without the egotism by which it is complicated and envenomed. I also maintain that a society whence individuality was banished would not be the more peaceful in consequence, since, in suppressing it, egotism would not have been suppressed; finally, I say that egotism would find such suppression to its advantage, since it would take possession of all the room that the departure of moral and intellectual individuality had left vacant in our souls, and that thus human nature would revenge, by degrading, itself.

(A society where individuality is proscribed may be socialist but cannot be sociable; cannot be human, cannot be living, cannot, in short, be a society at all; it contradicts the design of God, and robs Him of His own—I mean, Man.)

Where is the proof that individuality is of the evil one? that the effort to maintain it independent of the power of the crowd and the yoke of tradition, the scrupulous attention to the inner voice, the respect for

our own reason, the anxious search after truth,—who shall say that all this is a fruit of sin? We, for our part, will rather say that if all this be not actually the truth, it is a step towards it; these are advances that we make, pledges that we give to truth. Your individuality is no doubt that of a sinful creature, but it is all of good that sin has left us, if it be left; the effect of sin has been to weaken it; it is not a thing evil in itself; its fault is to be feeble and often non-existent, and the glory of the Gospel is to stimulate it in some, to resuscitate it in the majority, and to purify it in all.

(2.) *Individuality — Society — Christianity — Liberty — Responsibility — Individuality and Socialism — Man and Humanity.*

The sentiment of individuality and the principle of liberty (personal and no longer national merely), the idea, in short, of the duality of man and society, spring, for modern nations, under the inspiration of evangelical dogmas—the dogma of the fall and that of redemption.

It is religion which has maintained in all peoples the stability and right of human personality, although men have almost everywhere tried, by rendering religion national, to suborn it in favour of impersonality. They have tried to make the gods they devised gods of the nation rather than the individual. Nevertheless, the immediate relation of the individual man with the Divine being, and the future life, having been formally conceded, individuality found in it a resting-

place, and, as it were, a guarantee. The Gospel came, and this great idea, this idea which makes man to be such, was crystallized by the Gospel into the purest diamond. What then remained to be done by the adversaries of the principle? Why, to make a religion out of the very abandonment of this principle, that is to say, a religion against religion, for nothing is more irreligious than a dogma that diminishes or denies the principle of individuality. Catholicism has done all it possibly could to weaken without denying it; socialism, its heir, has gone a step farther. In repudiating the idea of individual salvation, or in treating it with a contempt that amounts to exclusion, it has dealt blows to human personality, of which it is fully conscious, and for which it applauds itself.

There may, up to a certain point, be individuality without religion; there is no religion without individuality, and religion confirms and consecrates individuality even outside its own domain. Now individuality is to the moral what the vertebral column is to the physical man. It is, indeed, rather the very substance of the man; it is by individuality that he attains his true stature; and so long as he remains below it, he may indeed hold the place of a man on earth, but he is not really one. If man, as has been said, be a religious being, he is only so upon the condition of individuality, religion being nothing but a relation between the Supreme *Me* and the *me* of each one of us. Thus every system of

absorption must needs be an irreligious system ; and union, not unity, is the true name of the relation that binds us to God in the act of adoration and in that of obedience.

Religion, mighty to consecrate the principle of individuality when she recognises it, is equally adapted to encourage the opposite principle when she bows down thereto.

Religion alone, we are fully convinced of it, can successfully wrestle with socialism ; but this is on condition of not being itself socialistic.

The individuality that energetic thought had difficulty in maintaining, and maintained but imperfectly in a small minority, becomes on the more popular ground of duty and love the right of all Christians. The most obscure of the worshippers of Jesus can on occasion hold his ground against the most learned of philosophers, the most passionate of partisans. It is on the platform of liberty that God has come to seek him. It was freely that he submitted himself to God. This deliberate and voluntary submission gives him an added stability ; and henceforth, with regard to the world, his dependence constitutes his freedom.

Jesus Christ has taught the principle of individuality by creating it, or, if you will, by restoring its freedom ; He has placed it in the world by placing it in religion, from whence it has spread into all the spheres of life.

Of all purely human religions, as well as all pagan

systems of policy, not one has ventured to do homage to individuality. The implicit negation of the sovereignty of conscience is at the base of all religious systems anterior or averse to Christianity. It is a deep-drawn line of demarcation, or rather it is an abyss between them and it. Judaism was the bridge thrown across this abyss. It did not actually consecrate the principle, but it prepared its advent.

The Gospel addresses itself to individuals. It is not to an abstract negative man, neutralised by the ideas of all other men, that it addresses its message; it is to you, to us, to him, to each one of us, just as nature has made and given him. It is to each man immediately that God has said in His Gospel, "Come and let us reason together." Each man is taken apart in what he has of peculiar and exclusive. No collective being interposes between him and God; no national or secular idea answers in his name to the Divine interrogatory. It dealt with himself alone and exclusively, as though he were the only one in the world, as though he were humanity. Without this condition the word sounds in vain for us, who are we ourselves no more.

To become Christians we must first of all be ourselves. To make Christians, God wills first of all to find men. Far, then, from dreading individuality, this religion accepts, seeks it, strengthens, consecrates. How often it has exhumed from beneath a thousand circumstances that personality which had ceased to be ours, and which, without its powerful

appeal, would probably never have been rediscovered! The Gospel loves individuality because it is a force, and because the treasure it brings will only be well preserved and well defended by the strong. This is why it is eager to cultivate wherever it finds it; and to awaken, to as it were create it, where it was not apparent before.

The true Christian—he, I mean, who is so neither by conventionality, inheritance, system, nor party spirit (note carefully all these points),—the true Christian is eminently individual, and all that characterised him before his conversion becomes more defined and prominent after it.

This individuality does not isolate a man; how indeed should he be isolated by a force which in itself is by no means unsocial, and which has just received the seal and impulse of charity?

I firmly believe that Christianity is destined to maintain in the world that individuality which is threatened by so many different causes. I also believe that it is from individuality we have to expect the means of that social restoration invoked alike by the most opposite in opinion.

Liberty, individuality, these two terms correspond so exactly that we may call them synonymous; for we are not free under the empire of irresistible laws that deal with man as a species. And again, religion and individuality are inseparable terms. A collective religion is no religion at all.

Jesus Christ has willed to raise Christian obe-

dience to the highest degree of spontaneity ; and the element of individuality, repressed in the old economy, to the highest power. It is only when the exercise of liberty is impossible that we are permitted to wait ; and even in that voluntary submission there is some degree of liberty for the Christian. This principle, forgotten till the sixteenth century, renders Protestantism a very serious thing ; and if we are to rejoice in this restoration of the Gospel, and with it of liberty and personal responsibility, we must do so with trembling. But if the impossibility of foreseeing and calculating the consequences of each action were to prevent us from acting, it is clear we should never act at all.

God, who knows the value of individuality better than we, and who discerned beforehand the dangers that would threaten and the means of preserving it, God who, on the other side, has willed individuality and not individualism, has, by one same fact, secured the one and repressed the other ; the Gospel, the most social of systems, is the most inviolable asylum of individuality.

Such is the power of individual Christianity that it revolutionises all our faculties, and gives them an extraordinary impulse compared to their previous habits. This effect is not unknown to any range of intelligence ; the Christian sentiment adds force to force itself ; "it gives to him who hath," and shows that there is no affluence of genius which may not receive some addition from a moral excita-

tion; but its efforts are peculiarly wonderful on slow and indolent minds.

Christianity has only proclaimed formally the religious responsibility of the individual, but this was enough; responsibility in matters of conscience implied the sovereignty of the conscience; the consequence had necessarily to be drawn at length from the principle: it is so drawn! Everywhere, more or less, the spiritual and the temporal are distinct as law and morals, as crime and sin. This is not an accident, but a necessity—not a passing phase, but the normal and final state of society, a social truth acquired by humanity, one of the axioms of science and civilisation. But what then is this distinction of the temporal from the spiritual if not in principle and anticipation the distinction of two societies which represent these two orders of interests—the society of time and that of eternity?

Individuality is the true socialism, and the real enemies of society are those who, refusing it nothing, lend themselves by their silence to the convention of a false religious unity, and render to Cæsar (that is to say, to society) what belongs only to God.

True unity is guaranteed by individuality itself, which finds its real sphere there.

(People cry out in favour of society against individuality without seeing that it is because individuality is weak that society is so too, and that the losses of the former can but impoverish the latter. They forget that the more or less strong

cohesion of society has for its measure the very individuality which is composed of conviction and will. Who has said that individuality is formed only of what divides and isolates, not of what binds and reunites? Till when will men persist in confounding individuality with individualism? If the true social unity be the harmony of thoughts and the concurrence of wills, society will be so much the more strong and real as there is the more of will and thought in each of its members.

The more individual we are, the more human; what there is in us of most primitive and most general, consequently what associates us with humanity at large, appears in the reverence for and culture of individuality; these make us more universal, more cosmopolite, so that by one and the same stroke the partial unity becomes living, the total unity more real and more sensible.)

And then, after all, individuality is humanity, is life. He who has no individual life does not really live, and only offers to our deluded eyes the simulacrum of a human being. Such a one cheats his destiny, for he traverses existence but as a shadow, without reality; society lives in his place by virtue of a power of attorney, which he has allowed it to extort from him. The man is lost, in every sense, by abdicating his individual character; for if individuality be neither salvation nor its earnest, it is at least its indispensable condition. There is no religious life, consequently no salvation, without it;

and the faith which restores us to God begins by restoring us to ourselves. We must be men in order to become Christians.

How obtain men if you do not first of all reform individuals? To efface individuality is to efface humanity, the human reality. To restore individuals to society is to restore to it men. Man, in fact, is only man on condition of being himself. By what he individually is, he loves, believes, obeys. The abstract man has nothing more than the appearance of all this; is a tree without sap, a body without bones, is the mere type of man, not really man. It would no doubt be vain to try and banish authority, example, and habit from human life; but they are sure enough to assert themselves, without our hurrying to throw the human *me*, the human reality, into its three *oubliettes*.

Individuality does not consist in differing from other men, but in realising under an individual form, and hence more energetically, the general characteristics of humanity. To be individual is to be as much as possible the proprietor of one's opinions, one's feelings, one's whole being in short, instead of being merely their tenant, the condition to which so many of the most learned and enlightened men have chosen to reduce themselves. Not only is individuality far from being essentially a schism, a heresy, but it is a chance of being better understood, better felt; it is the principle of a vast and living unity.

God, out of love to all men, has willed that they should form a society. He has ordained for these *beings* the *arrangement* which suited them best; but He has not created the *beings* for the arrangement. He, the all-wise God, has seen and has declared it not good for man to be alone; He has consequently co-ordained man for man, has decreed that man should be man solely by that contact, has linked the development of all our faculties of soul and mind with the social state, has rendered society as essential to man as his heart or his brain, has only willed him, conceived him, as associated; and just as He has constituted him essentially complex by the indissoluble union of soul and body, so He has made him essentially social, causing his character of man to depend upon that of member of a community. Thus we see that the importance of society is great; but this importance, being entirely relative to the individual, is only his own importance under a different name; so that there is a great gulph from our recognition of the facts above enumerated and our representing to ourselves society as a *being*: society has no existence out of the individual—nay, it exists in that very individual as a tendency, a want, an attribute; society is man seeking his fellow. Touching and adorable mystery, that our passions have covered with a bloody veil, and over which we are now spreading the mist of our systems!

(I want man complete, spontaneous, individual, in order that he may submit himself as man to the

general interest. I would have him master of himself that he may be servant of all. I insist upon his internal liberty in the interests of that Power which claims to rule over it. Justice and reason, those universal laws, are the sovereigns whose triumph individuality is to secure and enhance.

Is not individuality the gift of being freely and spontaneously, under the form of our own peculiar character, what many other souls equally are? It is the *proprie communia dicere* of the poet, applied to the moral man. (Far from contrasting individuality with unity, as with its opposite, we must connect it therewith as means to an end. Consciences left to themselves, essentially say the same thing. Struck on a certain side, all souls give back much the same tones. In any given number of individuals the more distinct consciences we can count the less discord will there be between them. Even the differences that seem to proceed from the conscience, come in reality from the mind and its weaknesses; conscience may indeed ratify a false idea, but is not the original deviser of it, and the more a man appeals to his conscience the more probable is it that he will agree with another man who has equally appealed to his.) I mean to say that, in general, two conscientious men who sincerely enter into the depths of their own spirit, there to seek practical direction, will be found to agree. I might go further, and say that by making an equally conscientious use of conscience all men would become Christians; if not, where is the re-

sponsibility of the unbeliever? But practically, consciences are not identical, and cannot be so. The *dictamen* of conscience has not the evidence that leads to identity.

Every man who has caused humanity to take an onward step—every man whose name is read in letters of gold or fire in the annals of nations and the history of art, has been gifted with intense individuality; without this, no talent, no genius, no extended influence! But on the other hand there is no extended influence, no genius, no talent, without those thoughts which belong to all, in all times, and are, so to speak, man himself, universal man. The power and charm of individuality do not so much consist in having thoughts which are only ours, as in expressing in a manner peculiarly our own a thought which belongs to all the world. I say to all the world, without excepting those that oppose it, *proprie communia dicere*. Truth certainly is not individual, but yet it must become so. This is the twofold mystery, twofold magic of talent; you feel that there is in it a something that perfectly resembles itself alone, and yet you find your own entire self—only luminous and transfigured—therein. The double secret of the power exerted by works of great genius consists in belonging to their own epoch, and yet transcending it. Montesquieu would not have written *L'Esprit des Loix* a hundred years earlier; to produce such a monument of genius it was necessary that he should belong to, and yet dominate, the eighteenth century.

It is with the soul engaged in the life of religion, or that of thought, as with the vessel launched upon the waters, and seeking beyond the ocean for the shores of a new world. This ocean is society, religious or civil. It bears us just as the ocean does—fluid mass, on which the vessel can indeed trace furrows, but may nowhere halt. The ocean bears the ship, but the ocean may swallow it up, and sometimes does so ; society swallows us up still more often, but yet it is what upbears us ; nor can we arrive without being upborne by it, for it is like the sea, which, less fluid than the air, and less dense than the earth, just yields to and resists us enough to sustain without impeding our progress towards the desired goal. Our haven is not at the bottom, but beyond the limits of this sea. In ploughing its deep waters let us beware of disappearing in their depths. It is enough that we yield the keel of our vessel to the element that sustains us. We may founder in the ocean of society as in that of our globe, and it is useless to say on which of the two, shipwrecks are most frequent. The vessel which each one of us is bound to govern and preserve, is individuality.

I admire, then, the vessel and the ocean both ; but another than I collects and measures the waves of the great deep, and my vessel is my own : nay, more than this, the ocean is made for the vessel, not the vessel for the ocean ; the essential, the one great purpose, is that the vessel should get to land—that is, that the individual man alone in direct relation

with God, God's true object in His creative work, should accomplish his destiny; to which society contributes, indeed, by bearing him up, but man is distinct from society, he cannot blend himself with it, and woe to both if society come to swallow him up!

The essential point is not to have nothing to undergo, but to re-act in proportion; not to owe nothing, but to pay. Now the very gifts that we accept afford us something to give in our turn; and if we received nothing, we should have but little to bestow. In all cases we must admit this concurrence, or this antinomy of individuality and tradition, of general and personal thought, as one of those dualities of which our nature is woven, and which nothing can ever efface. Neither of these terms can absolutely disappear; but it is to be remarked that our moral decadence constantly tends to diminish the energy of the one, and to augment the powers of the other; and if the temptation to isolate themselves occurs to some, the temptation to let themselves be absorbed is almost universal. We are not *ourselves* from the first, we only become so by an act of will.

The thought of the individual cannot form itself outside of society nor without its aid; but it is the individual, not society, that thinks, believes, and loves; and if he borrow from society, as doubtless he does, many of the elements of his thought, he does not borrow thought itself. In this respect he is bound at once to make use of, and defend himself

against, society ; he even ought, when he finds himself insufficiently defended, to do all he can to reconquer from it, and it is one of the glories of Christianity to have consecrated this important duty in the highest sphere. In doing this it has by no means weakened society, on the contrary, it has strengthened it ; and if you take the word *society* in its fullest meaning, you may say that it is from religion that it dates and proceeds. (All that develops the principle of faith, duty, thought, and liberty—individual things in the soul of men, adds to the force of society.

It is better to connect ourselves with society than to learn to dispense with it, or rather to persuade ourselves that we are able to dispense with it. It is only given to the brute to suffice to itself. Man has been chained to man.

We hardly give more credit to spontaneous generation in the intellectual sphere than in the physical world ; the most individual work is to a certain point the work of all the world ; everywhere *solidarity* reappears, without, however, any prejudice to liberty : God has willed it so.

So long as man is immortal, he must be of more value than humanity, which is not so. So long as the individual expects a judgment beyond this world, he is greater than society, which expects none. He cannot admit any equality between himself, who is a being, and society, which is not a being, but an arrangement between beings. He feels that the substance is

superior to the form, and that which is to last to that which is not to last. The immortality of the soul dethrones society, and places it at the feet, not doubtless of the individual, but of individuality.

If we could reasonably establish an opposition between the individual and society, we should not hesitate to say that the former is the nobler of the two. This does not most assuredly mean that one single being is preferable to all: it means rather that society has been made for man; that man, or, if you will, the human creature, human nature, is the end for which that society exists, without which the individual man cannot develop or perfect himself, cannot consequently draw near to God. Further, society is for every man a theatre assigned to his activity, an opportunity provided for his virtues, a barrier opposed to his egotism, a revelation made to him of several of the laws of his nature. There is one thing that especially demands our admiration; it is that the more a man devotes himself to his brothers, the more he is master of himself; the more sociable, the more free; the less he claims, the more he receives; and finally, the less he is engrossed by, the more he is, himself. (Human personality and society, very far from being mutual obstacles, lend each other mutual aid. Duty is the point of intersection of the two forces. Individuality and sociability grow together, and reciprocally exalt each other in the accomplishment and the worship of duty. Every sacrifice imposed upon the one is a loss to the other.)

Ask everything from man in the name of humanity, or, if the expression please you better, in the name of humanitarian interests, everything except his dignity as a responsible being, and his personal relations with God.

Society, too, is doubtless a truth, but it would but be an error were it proved that it could only subsist by silencing individual conviction, which, if it be not the seat, is at least the channel of all truth.

Individuality, apart from generality, is but an absurd and inconsistent Protestantism; it ought to dissolve, without annulling itself, in the catholicism of the human soul.

(3.) *Actual state of Society—Socialism—Nationalism—Pantheism.*

Human individuality gets absorbed in totality at two very different eras of the life of societies; in their first childhood, and in that far advanced epoch which would be that of their death were there not a caldron of Pelias for decrepid nations. In the first of these eras man acknowledges himself weak against nature; he needs to feel himself a member of a whole; he lives, with that whole, upon the as yet inexhausted fund of primitive traditions which belong to everybody and to nobody; whatever gets done then is the work of all; the epoch, the society may be individual, the individual alone is not so. The whole interval between these early ages and the latest is

filled by the triumphs of individuality. Then come the times when, society being extremely strong, the individual does not need to be so. All natural forces working only inasmuch as they are necessitated to work, individuality folds up or restrains itself; we might say it had been placed in retirement. Then it is that theories formularise themselves and lend assistance to facts.

The social world of the nineteenth century, less hideous than that of the Cæsars, is not less effete with regard to moral beliefs.

Will, conscience, and love will remain the peculiar property of the individual; but it is certain that individuality is threatened alike by everything, in the state of the actual world, of bad, of good, and at all events of inevitable. Unless in the previous development of individuality we see nothing beyond temporary advances made by human nature in the hope of a final state, where it will be able to depose its functions and re-enter into rest, we cannot doubt that the level drawn across all the prominences of the social body must be to the prejudice of that body itself, as well as to the beauty of human existence. This sort of spiritual democracy, which places itself, like the "jealous God," opposite our moral nature, forgets that when once the spring of individuality is broken, its own spring will be in great danger of being so, and that, carried by individuality to the degree of force and stability that it now enjoys, it cannot with impunity deny its

origin, and condemn the source from whence it has flowed.

There is one thing, at least, that we must be explicit upon. The remedy proposed, whatever it may be, ought to correspond with the two diseases we have just pointed out; it ought, in one sense, to recompose unity, and in another to bring out plurality into prominence; its action should be such as to make us live at the same time more energetically in our own selves and in the whole; two effects which, although they may seem opposed, nevertheless subserve, nay, imply each other, and jointly promote the end of human life; for we are only adapted to social life upon condition of having a life of our own, and we only truly belong to society on condition of being in the first instance completely men. Now there is no system, there is only the revelation of God, which can at the same time and by the same means snatch us from individualism, and yet consecrate our individuality. This is one of the dualities that religion resolves; one of the marvellous reconciliations it effects. It unites us to society by self-abnegation, and keeps us individual through conscience; for religion is the awakening of conscience. The two effects spring from one principle, their substance is the same. Looked at closely, they are but two aspects of one fact.

The condition of our epoch presents us with two features apparently contradictory: the relaxation of social unity by the ever more avowed predominance

of egotism ; and the increasingly strong tendency of conscience to abdicate in order to yield to the torrent of what is called public opinion, or the spirit of the age. Thus the progress of *individualism* on the one hand, on the other the gradual extinction of *individuality*, constitute through the action of one cause the double abyss, or rather the two abysses, hollowed out, the one inside the other, into which we are plunged.

The social influence of Christianity, immense though it be, is not the whole of Christianity—is only an indirect and remote effect of its doctrine and its action. To know what it is, we must study it, not only in history, but in the conscience and the Gospel.

A soul has to be restored to man, who no longer has one. There is given him the soul of all the world ; and when the internal guide has disappeared, there is imposed upon him universal history, that is, the common conviction of the very humanity, each of whose members has no longer any conviction! And it is forgotten that a general, real, powerful conviction can be nothing else than the spontaneous agreement of individual convictions! How make a savoury dish out of a thousand insipid ingredients? How bring life out of death, though multiplied a million fold?

Our present way of thinking tends to make the soul depend on, and, as it were, proceed from society, and to derive from the social state whatever exists of intimate thought. The middle ages saw or felt

differently. There were, I confess, some alarming consequences from the principle they adopted, but that principle was great and elevated ; it proceeded from thought to reality, from spirit to matter, from doctrines to social arrangements. The soul had not yet deserted its deep places to live at the surface ; the relations of the human spirit with the invisible and the infinite were still a reality, and by the common consent of all, the most important and influential of all realities. Voluntarily and frequently, external action gushed from this profound source, and the decision of these essential questions was looked upon as a very positive interest, worthy of more than one sacrifice. I confess that danger was not far off : when men are persuaded that thought has a sovereign right over the world, instead of leaving it to make its own way, they are too likely to want to do so for it, and to impose certain metaphysical theorems on society and on individual consciences. Religious intolerance is indeed sure to find an accomplice in this tendency ; but, nevertheless, the tendency denotes a spiritualistic character in the epoch that one must needs admire.

One laments that all liberties should abound except the liberty of the soul ; laments that, while artists aspire after and exaggerate liberty, nothing is more rare than an original character ; laments to see opinion so overmastering and personal convictions so feeble. It could not but be that personality took refuge somewhere, accordingly it has made

itself a nest in men's interests ; self-indulgence, not self-sacrifice, has inherited after defunct individuality.

If we were to study the character of what now-a-days goes by the name of *civilisation*, we should feel that, drawn from the same source as our institutions, it is quite as little favourable to the maintenance and development of individuality. Civilisation, in its etymological sense, is the formation of the citizen, of the complete man ; but as understood by our epoch, it is the progress of the intellect in the interests of material progress ; or if this combination be denied us, the progress of the intellect, together with that of well-being. Science has not created this strange definition ; but science, which we always see follow in the train of morals, and model itself upon them, faithfully represents this idea. It has placed psychology in the room of morality, and utility in that of right. Without actually denying the existence of duties, it has transformed them into rational necessities ; without denying the substance of right, it has denied its essence by deriving it entirely from the universal interest.

Modern liberty has consecrated the great principle of individuality, and is constantly insisting upon its application. An institution which never ceases to appeal to the wishes of each and all, supposes in every case a personal conviction respecting the questions that it propounds. This is not peculiar to pure democracy ; representative democracy, although it do not propose the same questions to all, nevertheless

appeals to the consciences of all. Electoral questions are not purely personal; they involve questions of principle. The elector needs to have made up his mind on more points than is supposed. He cannot have an opinion about men without having one about things, and his electoral vote contains, if I may so express myself, a deliberative vote. The function attributed to him implies, then, some personal knowledge and conviction; if not, the whole constitutional edifice would be a lie, and democracy would resolve itself, as it has too often done, into a fluctuating and periodically displaced oligarchy. Once more, then, we say that our social system rests on individuality. But individuality only forms by pronouncing itself; only proves itself by expression. He who disguises his convictions on subjects of this class has none, never will have; and he who has no convictions will never be, despite his votes and all his external activity, a true member of the political association, such as our age has made it. And this nullity, generalising itself, brings us back to our starting point, to the system that we have repudiated, that of one, or of some, transacting the affairs of all, or their own affairs in the name of all.

There are individual errors; there are general errors. A whole nation may be the dupe of a coarse sophism, and in such a nation the man of most enlightened and stable mind is nationally a fool.

What is prejudice if it be not the whole of our

judgments chained to our first impressions? what is habit except the subjection of our present to our past? what is example but the transubstantiation of all into each? In proportion as these forces triumph in us, must not our personalities become attenuated; must not the universal *me* absorb the true *me*? At least there goes on a singular fusion or assimilation. The individual appropriates to such a degree the ideas of all, the tendencies of all—converts them so thoroughly into his own substance, *in succum et sanguinem*, that had he actually conceived them, it seems as though he could hardly love them better. He even goes so far as to imagine that they are inherent in and peculiar to himself; he attaches to them an interest of personal glory or dignity; he becomes so possessed by them as to appear strikingly individual in this borrowed character; a confusion is made which deceives him first of all, and us after him. All this aggregate of ideas and feelings are him, and are not him; they are the general life identified with his, grafted on the trunk of his personality. But the more complete the identification and the illusion, the more consequently does individuality get effaced; nothing more of it remains than is wanted to form a support to the national character and to individualise it in each; but true individuality, the real native *me*, sinks even more and more out of sight beneath the weight of all that is given it to carry.

Such is the natural tendency and such the re-

sults of institutions when nothing counterbalances them.

In all times the political institution, founded upon individuality, has had a tendency to weigh heavily upon its base, and to crush its support. It has, so to speak, paved the field which contained the seed of individual life, and only allowed it to send up some poor feeble blades through its own interstices. In this it has but unreservedly obeyed its own nature—but yielded without resistance to its specific gravity. It only belonged to our age to erect an involuntary exaggeration into a system, and to place at the base of the social institution what has everywhere prepared its ruin, or rendered it irreparable. Everything has its reason, and no doubt the idea of proscribing individuality has not occurred suddenly and by chance.

By the very effect of sin, egotism, or as it is called now-a-days, individualism, is at the bottom of everything; it is at the base of all societies. The true idea of society exists, but ideal society does not. This ideal society would be completely foreign to the individual principle. It would be all the world, and no one in particular. But in reality it is some one, and it is not all the world. The State is always a party.

There is no sense in accusing society, which is not a person, as though it were one; but there is sense in complaining of the state of society, more particularly of what one calls anarchy of ideas—of what would

perhaps be better named absence of convictions, dissolution of principles, and death of instincts. But as a society has neither convictions, nor principles, nor instincts, it behoves individuals to have these for society; it belongs to all the world to reform all the world, or, at all events, it belongs to the small number that has both knowledge and power to come to the assistance of those who have neither, and above all, to teach them self-help. To proceed differently is to wish, as a wise man once said, to drive in the wedge by the thick end.

Be *yourselves*; determine and circumscribe your position; have a focus,—this is your first duty towards society. When you gather back the burning coals from the circumference to the centre, this is for the advantage of the circumference.

In no time, and still less formerly than at present, has man been able to shut himself up in individuality. Neither will facts allow this, nor his own powers suffice to it in any case; for man enters the world subject to the law of solidarity, and society is to him what soil is to the plant. But, moreover, the idea of individuality in its moral and sublime aspect was for a long time above his reach. If he could not conceive of humanity, which makes all human beings to be one whole, one unity, and as it were one person, neither was he in a condition to conceive of individuality, in virtue of which each one belongs to himself, a veritable person, and immediately connected with God; that is to say, man was equally incapable of

two opposite ideas, or, to speak more exactly, incapable of reuniting in thought the two terms of one and the same idea, that of man, an idea which is complete, and even correct, only in so far as it embraces and combines the two notions of individuality and humanity. It is in the intervening space, if not in the middle of these two poles, that the human mind sought, and we may even say found a halting-place. In this twofold impossibility of being really oneself, and uniting oneself in thought and feeling with the whole of humanity, nationality came to its aid,—nationality, a true idea so long as it is not exclusive, a just and beneficial idea when we place it in that very line which unites and leads, one to the other, the two ideas of individuality and humanity. But alas! nationality was the negative of both these. The first, individuality, came to get absorbed, or at least blunted thereby, lost consequently at once its highest characteristic and most excellent application, by which I mean personal religion, immediate communication with God, and eternal freedom of conscience and thought; because nationality, proceeding by the way of *expropriation* in the cause of public utility, declared the religion of individuals national and founded in the community, so that there only remained of human individuality the impure residuum and coarse dregs of selfishness. As for the idea of humanity, equally ancient as that of individuality, and born, we may say, on the same day as man himself, it was already almost entirely effaced, and the task

of nationality—that collective egotism, that hydra-headed personality, was to cause its least vestiges, and even its last memory, utterly to vanish away.

All individual life requires an end ; must it not be the same with the life of a nation ? Indeed, a nation perhaps can less dispense with one than a man. But if it be necessary that a nation should have an end, it would be desirable that it should find one without seeking for it.

Society is not properly a product of sociability.

In good logic, a socialist State is either a barracks or a monastery, according to the morals and temperament of the nation. The socialist State is necessarily communist in this sense, that it is the alone proprietor, and individuals are reduced to a usufruct in proportion to their merit, or their utility. Such a State imposes on all, its own religious taste and its philosophy, if it has one. A socialist State, in a word, accepts for its type a family where the children remain eternally minors.

Socialism implicitly professes the degradation of human nature, and the impossibility of its restoration. In this it is less consolatory than Christianity, which speaks of a fall and a restoration, and less consistent than rationalism, which only disputes the necessity of a restoration after having disputed the reality of a fall.

If by a miracle we could render all necessary offices attractive, what should we have made of man ? We have said it before—a thinking stomach. If this

be the last word of progress, let us progress no longer, let us retrograde.

The character of socialism is to proceed as though man and society, instead of being two, were only one.

The new Rome insensibly inaugurated a new socialism. Catholicism, in fact, is nothing else. It did not openly deny the principle of individuality in matters of religion, it did not dare to do this; it contented itself with putting forth pretensions with which this principle is incompatible, and, to say all in one word, with totally displacing the seat of authority. It did, in fact, so displace it; and Christianity thenceforth, changing its nature as far as this depended upon man, became sacerdotal and Jewish. After many tentatives, unfortunate in one sense, but yet not vain, since they had for effect to maintain the tradition of religious individualism in despite of Roman socialism, authority rediscovered its basis at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the principle of individuality received from our reformers, not indeed an explicit consecration, but irrevocable pledges. Nevertheless, socialism did not consider itself defeated. Even within the pale of Protestantism, which is nothing but a barrier raised for the defence of religious individuality, a new catholicism was born, as if some inimical power had decreed the eternal miscarriage of liberty. This limping and purblind catholicism is the State Church, or national religion.

Has socialism anything more audacious than the hypothesis in virtue of which all inhabitants of the same country are supposed to belong to the same conviction, and compulsorily bear the expenses of a ritual to which the majority are indifferent, and which a large number positively dislike and repudiate? To complain of the pretensions of socialism, and to wonder at its success, after having given it such a pledge, betrays, in our opinion, the most singular inconsistency.

Pantheism is alternately the natural complement and principle of socialism,—more often, however, its complement than its principle. At the present time, methinks, they appear together; they meet; at least, it is difficult to say which of the two has preceded the other: where one shows itself the other may soon be expected. For in both cases there is the negation of personality; you cannot refuse it to man and ascribe it to God, or deny it to God and maintain it for man; for these two personalities are materially and essentially related. At all events, socialism and pantheism expose each other by their juxtaposition; the first is no less the condemnation of the second than the second is of the first; we may judge each by the other as well as each in itself.

Our exclusive attention to social questions takes us back to the Jewish dispensation, where the people were transformed into an individual, and the individual lost sight of.

There is heathenism, irreligion, or at least a com-

plete absence of spirituality in seeing anything more in association than an institution of Providence, intended for individual improvement,—I mean for the improvement or perfecting of *all individuals*. If of the institution, which is only a mean, you make an end, be sure that what once was an end will no longer serve even as a mean; that is to say, that individual improvement will never be pursued as in the contrary system. The nation may be the object of my duty, of my devotedness; it will be so all the more that, in its preservation and success, I see an earnest of success for greater designs; but for all that, the nation is not my *end*, and ought not to be; it is too narrow to circumscribe the whole man; the whole man only finds room for himself in God.

What is the principle of socialism? It is fundamentally one with that of a theocracy; it is to place the human species under tutelage; to declare the individual, as such, a minor, and to perpetuate his minority eternally; it is to make authority the social principle, and only to yield to liberty what it is absolutely impossible to tear away from her; it is to rule despotically, not only the social or public career of the individual but his private, not only his external life but his internal, or, at all events, to take no account of the latter; it is consequently to fashion for him his religion, his philosophy, his conscience.

This idea is a very ancient one—it is classical, it is pagan; on it rested a whole world, whose funeral

knell was sounded by Christianity at its advent. But this antique socialism proved obstinate in its resistance ; it took refuge in Roman Catholicism, which is to socialism what the species is to the genus ; nay, it even penetrated into the Protestant world, and there, as elsewhere, overlooking the individual in order to get at the people, and at the same time looking upon the people as an individual, it has created or restored the fiction of national religions, has confounded the quality of believer with that of citizen, has supposed all citizens as such to be believers, and has boldly required from them contributions in favour of a faith which perhaps they did not share. If you wish to support this system, which is indeed socialism, altogether socialism, you must not stop here ; you must go further : you must wish in principle all that is wished by modern socialists, who, unlike those of old, are systematic and consistent. To desire that all citizens indiscriminately should contribute to the support of a certain form of religion is to shake hands with socialism, to give it pledges, to smooth for it with complacent hand the road of the future. All nationalists are unwittingly socialists, as all socialists are consciously nationalists. If you dread socialism, you must not approximate, but separate yourself as much as possible from it ; you must maintain, in all its integrity and all its bearings, the principle of religious liberty, which is pre-eminently that of individuality, and consequently the death of socialism.

Those who, while denying individuality, repudiate constraint and salutary severity, are only *socialists* of an abortive sort. Catholicism (Roman or Calvinist, it matters not which) is but the latest, and doubtless highest branch of the tree of socialism; and socialism, in its turn, is only catholicism on the materialist platform.

Socialism, whatever Rome may say, is the catholicism of our age—is a reaction against the principle of individuality, which, consecrated by Protestantism, has more or less distinguished the last three centuries. We will not say of this principle, as a panegyrist once said of a great captain, that it “has remained, as it were, buried in its triumph;” but we will most certainly say that a certain number of thinkers, and a portion of the public, have mistrusted this principle, mistrusted liberty (which is but another name for it), when they have imagined that, among all its other powers, it had not that of organisation. Men of little faith, whatever they may have said, they saw in the Protestant principle a germ of anarchy in society as well as in intellect, and an active cause of dissolution. Some absolutely condemned it, others denied it implicitly—that is to say, in their practice; or else, in their plans of social reform, refused it the applications and the space to which it believed itself entitled. Thus the new catholicism has gradually completed itself; it has for its religion pantheism, for its politics the sovereignty, or rather the divinity, of the people, for its social theory communism, for its

political economy the phalanstoy : as to its morality, it is not yet invented—and it is not very easy to foresee to what part of the system such a thing as morality will contrive to adjust itself.

2. Church and State.

(1.) *System of Union between the Two: its Origin—Catholicism—Protestantism—Socialism—Effects of the Union both on Church and State.*

The love of domination (and, above all, of spiritual domination) is natural to the heart of man; it requires a cultivated religion and a very uncommon measure of piety to stifle it, and still more to inspire a horror of it; and how many men are there, who, sincere in other respects, are pursued by the specious idea that the temporal ought to be subordinated to the spiritual, not only by each in himself, but by each in his relation to others! Hence we have an original mischief, that we shall eternally meet in our way. Perhaps the true principle, the *primum mobile*, of the alliance against which we protest, was almost invariably clerical ambition, or what an eminent English writer has opposed under the name of *spiritual despotism*.

The long persistence of certain errors, both in theory and practice, is often explained by the support lent them by two interests, or two parties, diametrically opposed to each other, but nevertheless,

although in an opposite spirit, uniting to desire the same results, and thus forming a majority. The State Church would have long ago ceased to exist if real Christians, or political unbelievers, had left off supporting her.

The politico-religious establishment will never be forsaken, before its fall, by that numerous class of men who only accept a profession of religion as a happy medium between impiety and true religion itself, or who have not discovered any better preservation against religion than *a* religion.

All the religions of antiquity were essentially national; they were intimately united with political institutions; they formed part of them; they were their own reflection, impress, or emblem; they modelled themselves upon the State, not the State upon them. Offspring as they were of individual wants, born beside the domestic hearth (which has everywhere been the earliest altar), they nevertheless had in view, first of all the State, then the individual. True, the State did not forbid the individual to make the public religion his own personal one, to think, to feel, to individualise his religion; but these religions, resembling in their barren magnificence and frivolous grace those double flowers that veil no fruit—these religions had nothing in them that awoke individuality, nothing that could become individual; they did not incarnate themselves—did not identify themselves with the man—were not, so to speak, the soul of his soul; and observe this, their

dogmas and ordinances were such as never to give to the individual any consciousness of the duality existing between man and society. Their law corresponded so exactly with the law of the land, that one might suppose they had been shaped by that standard. In a word, religion, which appears made to raise us above ourselves and above society—religion, from the point of view of antiquity, was still self, still society. We return by a circuitous way to the point whence we set out. Religion is to the State what a periphrasis is to the simple word.

We must, indeed, acknowledge that what we now-a-days call the distinction between the temporal and the spiritual was absolutely unknown to the peoples of ancient days; the unity of man and society was universally taken for granted. The earliest formula was, All that man is, society ought to be; but it could not fail to be soon replaced by another, All that society is, man, too, should be.

The State of olden times, with its universal power and responsibility, has for ever disappeared. If it have continued to govern purely moral interests, this has no longer been with a thorough right or with common consent. The conflicts, formerly impossible, between religion and politics, have, on the contrary, been perpetual, and modern history is, in great part, the history of these conflicts. If they ever cease, it will not be through the restoration of the ancient State, but by its still more entire and absolute abolition. The theories of a few speculators, their

instincts which they erect into a system, are perfectly powerless here; the State in our day is no longer the whole of man, it is only one of the forms and conditions of human life; it represents and guarantees rights; it no longer governs all our interests, but it protects them all. The human soul henceforth provides for what concerns itself alone. The very men who are most ardent and determined in claiming for the modern State all the attributes of the ancient, would be more than disconcerted if it really grasped at these. On the morrow, or the evening of the day this happened, we should see them in the foremost ranks of those who, for some time past, have been called individualists.

The State of antiquity had provided for the defence of all against each; it was reserved for the modern State to maintain the right, not only of each against each, but of each against all. This is the one distinctly modern and distinctly Christian feature of our polity. This is the spoil—alas! the bloody spoil—won by so many centuries of woe. This is our glorious banner, this the truth that but just now was floating gaily and brightly over the vessel of humanity. Are we to see the black flag of socialism replace for ever this noble standard?

The system of State Churches can only be advantageously defended, can only have a philosophy of its own, from the point of view of pantheism.

M. de Laménais alternately wished to give to

religion the support of the Government and of the people. Two forms of State religion these—we will have nothing to do with either of them.

From the point of view of Rothes' system, it is not the State which is man, it is humanity.

Property, exclusively invested with power in the Church, is the seal of materialism affixed to a quite spiritual institution.

State religions can have no more zealous champions than the adversaries of all positive religion.

Spinoza, as well as Hobbes and Hume, gives up religion to the civil Government. Thinkers of the materialist or fatalist school are firm upholders of a State religion.

Nationalism in religion, or national Christianity, implicitly denies the great principle of the duality of man and of society by the very fact that it denies the first fall of man; for the first fall implies this duality, and nationalism, on the contrary, presupposes their identity; and by so doing it shakes hands with socialism, gives it pledges, affords it a fulcrum.

We must needs allow that if the Catholic Church have but too much employed the State for the realisation of her own ends, yet she has never allowed herself to be absorbed by the State. She has indeed, very unfortunately, borrowed force and majesty therefrom; still more disastrously has she called the arms of flesh of the State to assist her own violent measures; but we must do her this justice, she has never

known servitude, never given up her independence as the price of the favours shown her.

The Church State, properly so called, is an invention of the Reformation : when afraid of its own principle, it denied it in action after having proclaimed it in words. The Reformation, in separating itself from the Roman Church, which was neither the multitude nor the civil power, was constrained, in order to find a head, to address itself either to the people or the civil power. Its principle would have led it to choose the people, but in general it had not courage for this; and in order to possess a present and visible authority, it addressed itself to civil power, of which it made a bishop. Such is the character of State Churches; they may be briefly designated as the episcopate of the civil Government.

Thus, then, the real State Churches are not so old; they only date from the sixteenth century, and may, without doing them injustice, be called abortions of Protestantism. For Protestantism, in consecrating the principle of individuality, pledged itself to a republic, bound itself to liberty, whereas we see that it weakened and infringed its principle at the very moment of proclaiming it.

If under the dispensation of liberty even, the incline towards a religion of numbers and of accidents is but too much felt, how much more should we deprecate an institution which renders this incline more rapid, and erects the evil into a principle!

I do not know whether it has been remarked that

the zealous defenders of the national system among Protestants appeal to the very principles on which Catholics lean in their defence of their Church. All that Protestants urge against Roman unity may equally be urged against the national system; if the Roman unity be massive, inarticulate, material, dead, what pray is theirs? If theirs be rational how can they prove that of Rome not to be so? If a political body can have a religion, why should not an ecclesiastical? If the former have religious discernment may not the other more reasonably claim it? The difference is, that the Roman clergy allege texts in their favour, invoke the idea of a perpetual inspiration, and that the national Church neither alleges nor invokes anything of the kind. The difference, too, is that Catholicism believes itself universal as truth, and nationalism, local as opinion. It did once occur to Catholicism to make itself national, but it soon felt that this was to be no longer catholic; now it is once more *ultramontane*, and henceforth in its true position. The truth for Protestantism lies in being *ultramundane*, another way of not being national. The revival of Catholicism and of Christianity has its effect, the denationalisation of both.

At the Reformation, man gradually extracted his own thought, religious or philosophical, from the indivisible fund of public belief. The individuality of conscience and reason, oppressed and panting beneath the weight of the institutions and theocratic prejudices of the middle ages, gushed forth again

at the close of that long period. This principle of life, consecrated beforehand by the Gospel, has everywhere penetrated, and at once defies the feeble remnant of theocracy that modern institutions still contain, and the element of pantheistic chivalry that socialist systems essay to develop. The individual principle of Protestantism, having at length taken full consciousness of itself, repudiates the principle of massive and involuntary agglomeration in Church matters. This is to pronounce the sentence of death on national Churches.

The soul of man, the Church, which is the soul of humanity, has God for husband; has sworn Him her entire faith; sworn to obey Him alone, and to recognise in Him only the inalienable right of a husband. But the alliance that she, as a spiritual society, contracts with a society which has nothing spiritual about it, transmitting to that society the competence and authority which only belong to God, places her in a flagrant and permanent state of adultery.

The fiction of a State Church is of all things the best adapted to put consciences to sleep; and the more this institution puts on sonorous titles and pompous insignia, the more fast and profound will the sleep of those consciences be.

A Church, when it is the State that supports it, and when it is free into the bargain, is indeed actually a State within a State; or, at least, this is sufficiently the case to justify many fears, and explain many precautions.

If there be one thing in the world that is terrible, it is the tyranny of dogmatism. Nothing is so dangerous as a theologian in power. The faculty of employing in the defence and the propagation of truth other arms than those of which St. Paul affirmed, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal," has plunged into violence and cruelty men who, in an ordinary position, reduced to the sole resources of prayer and persuasion, would only have been, in relation to their brothers, suppliants full of authority. Out of a thousand Christians you will not find one whose character has not been perverted by such a position. Every religion protected from without will persecute; and persecute, too, for an *iota* of theology, an atom of metaphysics.

If I had to choose which of two evils should beset truth, I should entreat for her a vigorous persecution rather than such a protection as this. This precarious and fortuitous protection is only a yoke, and a dishonouring one.

Protected by oppressive measures, truth loses, I grant, none of her rights to respect; she is always truth; but surely she does lose her credit in men's minds. Alone, she would have made a strong impression; but now, an energetic and ineffaceable impression, that of the indignation the light of her auxiliary inspires, has anticipated her; she has now got to deal with minds cased in prejudice, which obstinately misapprehend her.

Nothing intimidates or perverts the religious sen-

timent so much as contact with the civil power. Religion, in the hands of the last, inevitably becomes a species of police. Conscience, hurt and alarmed, retires within itself ; creates itself in secret a religion that is exclusively its own, leaving to shallow souls the religion of form, or the forms of religion. But when, on the contrary, it is free from all impure contact, the religious sentiment spreads itself abundantly throughout life and society, penetrates the masses, filters through to the seat of power, forms, without contract or convention, a Christian nation, a Christian government. Authority then takes its tone from public conviction, and is thus the most precious of all expressions of society ; its morality is Christian ; its policy is Christian, because morals have inscribed this necessity on its mandates.

The national Church, fettered in her officiality and restrained by her very privileges, mingled with and allied to the world, heaping up fictions on fictions to the great damage of evangelical simplicity, constantly taking for granted what is not and pretending not to see what the whole world sees, substituting for the apostolic style that of chancery, inconsistent in her part if she attempts to be eccentric, unfaithful to her mission if she be not so,—the national Church is no longer a spiritual army, that is, she is not a Church. Her principle, which confounds her with the world, weakens, to the point of nullifying, her action upon the world, since what is false is always weak ; and her official relations, which are

constantly deceptive ones, add to the evil of her situation, for the simple reason, that whatever disguises a danger aggravates it. Politicians know all this, only they do not say so; will it then never be known except *they* speak? and must Christian prophets (for all Christians are such) for ever have eyes, and yet see not?

Christianity, by its very nature, is aggressive, conquering, creative; a state of warfare has been ordained it here below; it has been sent to disturb a false peace with a view to the true peace that it brings to men; conflict and dangers are its portion in the world; let it not be deprived of this portion; let it, whose natural condition is to stand with loins girt, beware of seating itself, of crouching down, in human institutions with which it has nothing in common; for if it too be human, it is not so in the sense they are; it is human as was the God-Man.

The religious sentiment is more sensitive and jealous than any other. It takes alarm at the least alloy; it is tarnished by the slightest contact; it tolerates no alliance with anything extraneous; its most vital interest is to disentangle itself from all foreign elements. Now the association of the Church with the State is evidently inimical to this interest.

Epochs of torpor and indifference tighten the ties of the Church with the State, because they draw tight her ties with the material world; but once let its life break forth, these bonds weigh upon her, she

seeks to loosen them, and if they are drawn yet closer she bursts them.

When the Church, as though she were the widow of her invisible spouse, allows this ring of the empire to be placed on her finger, it seems to me that, powerful externally in the extent of her conquests and the dismal silence of her old enemy—paganism, she seeks, in default of her internal energy, which is dying away, a foreign force, which may conceal her debility from all others, and more especially from herself; and that, like to a river weary of flowing, which hushes its waters to rest in the wide basin of a lake, so she too ceases to flow; only she must recommence her course at the other end of that still lake, which has no other movement than that bestowed on it by storms.

Having reached the summit of temporal prosperity, the Church was frightened, and let herself fall into the arms of the State. Precisely because her credit with the world was increasing, she should have avoided all contact, all union with the civil power: she did the very reverse, and seeing her peril where her safety lay, she sought her safety just where her peril lay; nay, was she not even more culpable, and did she not return a very different answer from Jesus Christ's to that temptation of the prince of darkness, "I will give thee all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them?"

That which has almost everywhere deadened religious wants, weakened religious feeling, and rendered

every species of worship distasteful, has been the stifling and unwholesome atmosphere of State religion, the usurpation of religious powers by political bodies, of the long profanation of which all the world is more or less conscious; it has been the idea to which such a system must need give credit, of all religious institutions being but a political instrument, an opinion which, propagated in the first instance by distinguished minds, has prevailed to blight in all hearts the idea of religion, and of all connected with it.

In accepting the safe conduct of temporal power religion tears its Divine credentials.

Religion is nothing else than the triumph of the invisible over the visible, of spirit over matter. To be religious is to believe in the spirit, that is to say, to believe that the spirit, or the truth, which is of God, has an intrinsic virtue sufficient for its end, and only to esteem real and legitimate the success attained by the spirit. No religion is worthy of its name if it do not say, "My kingdom is not of this world;" no religion is really a religion if it propose to itself an alliance with the civil power, either as means or end, for how after this could it still say, I represent on earth the idea of the independence and the sovereignty of the spirit, and its triumphs over matter. Who could say even which had triumphed with her, spirit or matter, or even which triumph it was that she aimed at? She has with her own hands torn her credentials, and even should she heap victory on victory, no one is justified in saying that

it is the spirit that has triumphed. It is open to every one merely to see policy in a religion that rests on political power, and most assuredly many will not fail to do so.

When religion is powerful it is power that has become religion.

Never has the State espoused the Christian religion, but only its shade and its phantom. It has never been able to espouse it, except despoiled of its essential characters, deprived of its peculiar life, or at least under the tacit understanding that it should never give free scope to its vital energies, but confine them within certain limits. Christianity has never been able to become a State religion except on the condition of being sane, not "beside itself;" in other words, of not being what it is.

Christian policy ceases to be Christian so soon as it ceases to appear strange and absurd to men of the world.

Facts have a language of their own. Now what says this fact of the Church, a society of consciences governed by the State, a society of interests? this fact of the institution, that recognises no other truth than usefulness and necessity, deciding none the less what concerns absolute truth? this fact of an institution, the character of which is to restrain individuality, intruding itself into a sphere where individuality triumphs in the very limits it prescribes itself, these limits being of its own prescription? this fact of a compulsory society directing the affairs of a

free society ? this fact, in a word, of matter governing mind ? Is it to be supposed that such a fact will keep silence ? No, it will speak ; it will declare that religion is a collective affair, which is false ; that society as society has a religion ; that spiritual interests run parallel with political, which is false ; that religion and public worship form a part of civil obligations, which is false ; lastly, as we have so often heard say, that we must follow the religion of our fathers, of our country, the official religion ; that it is always honourable to remain faithful to it, always ignominious to abandon it, which is false, which is infinitely and shamefully false.

This idea, like a slow and obstinate *carries*, has made incredible ravages in the human conscience. While taking care not to threaten external liberty, it has dealt terrible blows to internal ; it has taken away not liberty, indeed, but what is much more, the sentiment and idea of liberty. It has dulled consciences, attacked, rooted them to the soil ; has made religion the growth of earth, not heaven ; men have got accustomed to receive it ready-made from the same hands that regulate police and taxation ; they do not so much believe in the Word of God, or even in a Church, as in the State ; they have a religious banner, the State has one ; were it to change that religion, so would they ; nothing in the dulled and cauterised conscience would warn of the change or the difference ; men would accept from the State a new definition of truth as well (and better) as a new

division of parishes ; and as servitude degrades minds to the degree of making itself loved, they end by becoming enthusiastic about this Helotism in proportion to its antiquity, and making religion a mere affair of prescription, they grow sentimental about the religion of their fathers, without even inquiring whether they really hold that religion, or have indeed any religion at all.

The crime of State Churches is not so much that of preventing the display as preventing the formation of convictions ; their crime is tacitly to deny both conscience and religion.

When an institution that was exclusively spiritual begins to affect temporal attributes, a violence is done to its inner nature, which throws it at once into the last extremities of disease.

We cannot too often repeat it : every ecclesiastical body, even the most pious, will become persecuting if once it has power on its side.

The Gospel is in every point the reign of the spirit, or as philosophy would gladly put it, the reign of the idea. Jesus Christ came to consecrate and realise the rights and the powers of the pure idea. Our evil nature has protected, and under the two forms of Catholicism and nationalism has once more chained spirit to matter. In this close and fatal conjunction spirit becomes matter. Alas ! in all forms of the religious institution man is in danger of sacrificing the reality to the form ; but the greater, the more universal and eternal the danger, the more

important is it not to create, as does nationalism, the abuse into a principle.

There is a grave error in looking upon the Church as one of the establishments of the State—like schools, like the army,—and in believing that the Church is to expect from the State its organisation and its laws. The Church in some countries has, up to a certain point, founded the State, or, at all events, has cemented the political establishments, but where is it that the State has founded the Church? Its superior in dignity, it is also, if we look to dates, at least its contemporary. It exists by and for itself, and if it be not made to give laws, neither is it made to receive them.

Are you well aware of the great convenience of a religion of form to those who are averse to real religion? The fact is, that by filling up one way or other the empty space, it prevents anything else penetrating there. What do you suppose certain men mean when they say that it is desirable a people should have a religion? They mean, that *a* religion is the best preservation against *the* religion; that a *State religion* is a capsule in which real Christianity conceals itself; and that there is nothing better than a death that represents life. Hence it is that sceptics have so great a value for State religion.

Oh, how the enemies of religion must laugh inwardly, and with each other, to see believing men, dupes of a hypocritical respect, accept for religion a rank that compromises, and homage that enchains it!

It must not be imagined that the respect, and, above all, the love of a people for a religious institution is any stronger and deeper because it sees that spiritual institution in regular relations with the temporal power; the people has surer instincts on this head. It has a constitutional respect, indeed, for all external power and official authority, and in this sense, and no other, it respects the official religion and the authorised pastor. It looks with much the same eye upon its pastor and its mayor. And yet I am not sure of this; the pastor has pretensions that the mayor has not; he wants men's hearts, and wants them by law. This is not the way to obtain them. A minister of the Gospel is strong only by that moral authority for which no other can be a substitute, nay, which all other only injures by seeking to add itself thereto.

We must not deny the service that the Church rendered to European populations by assuming a public position, but neither must we forget what a price the children have paid for service rendered to their fathers.

We can only pretend in political matters to relative truth and relative good. But absolute truth and absolute good being the proper object of religion, a religious system which is false and corrupt is much more so than a political system of the same quality, and in this point of view the system of Church States is much less worthy of indulgence than the feudal system.

A people that has abdicated its most precious faculties; that has surrendered into the hands of the State the individual right of opinion, must needs become a frivolous people.

Looking at the innumerable evils of which religion has been either the pretext or the instrument, let us refer their cause to that fatal error which has established between the two independent institutions of Church and State forced and inevitably mischievous relations, which, in substituting physical empire for mere influence, has distorted and perverted the character of both institutions at once.

To protect without conviction is hypocrisy; to persecute without conviction is to join violence to hypocrisy; to carry on a fanatical course of action in a spirit of indifference is the part of a shameless Machiavellianism. Now, how many times have Governments presented us with this spectacle! or rather, where is it that they have not presented it?

Policy, in playing the part of religion, has forced religion to become a policy; but each has degraded itself by this conduct, and the latter more than the former.

What we can never forgive to the union we speak of, is not all the calamities, of which the very image alarms us, it is the having corrupted men by demoralising the two institutions which serve as the basis of social life; I mean religion and politics.

The greatest crime of the alliance is to have low-

ered characters, and falsified ideas, by legalising hypocrisy and basing institutions on falsehood.

(2.) *Existing Relations.*

The union of Church and State now-a-days signifies pretty nearly the contrary to what it signified under Constantine; and the same men who would have shuddered then at assisting at the signature of the contract, now advise and insist upon carrying it out; the same enmity which of old wished to have the Church out of the State, grown more clear-sighted now, wishes to have it in the State. With the exception of this untruth, candour and openness everywhere prevail, and the position of Christianity, becoming daily more defined, is that of an old man grown burdensome, whose ungrateful family, impatient to inherit his property, complain of his long life.

The system of State Churches can no longer be defended in our day as it used to be formerly; certain arguments have become impossible. And in general, indeed, it defends itself less than it attacks, contenting itself for the most part with contesting the worth, and, above all, the possibility of the opposite systems proposed, and trying to establish by way of exclusion the right that is denied to it.

There was, long ago, a religion of the masses, a collective faith, compact and indivisible, which, like a mighty torrent, swept all minds along. Unbelief, restricted to the depths of the heart, hardly took

account of itself; was veiled from its own eyes; now it knows, avows, and measures itself. In general, men believe better, but there are fewer believers, at least, fewer unqualified believers. Faith is no longer to be taken for granted, can no longer be insisted upon; neither the quality of citizen, nor even of public official, implies that of believers; religion, in a word, has ceased to be numbered among the exigencies of civil life.

Truth is always equal to itself; but truth has its times and seasons. If the universality of religious belief, if a universal adherence to the theocratic principle, formerly rendered the union inevitable, what a time is ours for theocracy; and how evidently the religious condition of men's minds all over Europe demands the separation of the two classes! That is the principle of our resurrection, that henceforth the form that Christianity must take, that is the earnest of its future! It would perish in relations, the falseness of which becomes even more palpable and revolting; but it will not perish, because, like Samson, it will break the rotten cords that bind it.

Every ruin is touching, and for the majority of men hope is less beautiful than memory. We who speak belong to such men, and perhaps we have drunk more deeply of this cup than any one of them. But the axe has been laid to the root of the tree. . . . Our temporising would avert nothing, and, indeed, speaking openly, does anything remain to destroy?

The candid partisans of the union must needs end by confessing it, between Church and State there is nowhere *union*, but only *arrangement*, in which principles go for nothing; morally, the separation is already consummated.

By the avowal and consent of the partisans of the union, the spiritual and temporal are pretty well detached from each other. This principle, which is nothing but the specially Christian principle, and which makes the characteristic difference between the old and new dispensation, has slowly and laboriously hollowed out its channel in society, and the stream, after having long covered an indefinite space, can no longer flow elsewhere.

About the time of great innovations, the idea from whence they are to spring is in the atmosphere; you inhale it with the air; it germinates unconsciously even in the minds most opposed to it: for if they do not hold that particular opinion, they have a thousand others that lead to it unawares. So it is with the separation of the temporal and spiritual; its triumph is secured; and I am entitled to declare that nothing remains to us but to make the incline more easy, and the only way of doing so is to prepare men's minds for the event.

Just as a Government must not adopt Christianity, which is too special for deists, so neither must it adopt deism, which is too general for Christians. A Government doing either the one or the other, particularises, excludes.

Some persons have brought forward an idea which has very little solidity about it, nay, which is not even specious; they have proposed that the State should have a religion which might be that of all possessing any religion, or rather, which should be contained in all religions. But they have forgotten that this general religion, by the very fact of being provided with a form and an establishment, would change from general to particular, from negative to positive, since it would be more or less exclusive of the special forms, which believe themselves the only true, or the only ones identical with truth.

The idea of submitting religion to rule must strike us by its opposition to the spirit which more and more dominates the world. Everything tends to restrict the sphere of authority, and to reduce the number of its exclusive attributes. The Government is only supposed to take charge of what individuals cannot. It enters into the modern idea of society to be—I will not say as weakly, but as little governed as possible. Men are anxious that the spontaneity of human nature should find space and material; that general interests should occupy the thought and heart of individuals who have no public functions connected with them; that society should freely advance, and transform itself under the seal of a few general convictions, placed out of the pale of attack. This is not an abstract thought, but a part of the life and instinct of modern societies. Can it then be, that what there is of most intimate and spontaneous

in man—the one thing which, in its principle and development, is the most completely alien to the course of this world, which, in a material sense, occupies no room in it, links itself with nothing, and prevents nothing, that this one thing, of all others, should be put under tutelage? Whence comes this difference? If religion be thus treated, is it because it is so much loved, or so much feared?

Theoretically the State has returned within its own limits, and confines itself even more exactly within them.

Liberalism is perfectly in accordance with this tendency of minds and institutions, of which, perhaps, it is the most correct name; radicalism, born enemy of individuality, may, indeed, for a time act inversely upon men's minds; but modern thought, permeated as it is with this generous sap, will finally prevail. Individuality will continue at the basis of society, and the ancient State, with its poetic grandeur, will remain a memory of the past.

The ancient or pagan State was, indeed, capable of absorbing the whole man, because individual religion, that of the conscience, did not as yet exist. The masses had a religion, the individual had none. Religion, therefore, entered without obstacle into the constitution of the State, or rather, it already found itself there. The State, more or less, had made it, and made it day by day; each one received it at its hands. The great unity, of which some tell us, was then possible in the State; and the State could present

itself as the consummation of man, or as man himself, to the great injury, no doubt, of the most important developments of which man is susceptible.

At the present time the State is the first of human institutions, the noblest of human achievements; but it is nothing more. Man makes the State, not the State man. Man is found in his entirety only in man. The State, man's production, instrument, and means, proceeds from him, but is, nevertheless, external to him, as the universe, proceeding from God, is for all that not God. Such is the characteristic of modern civilisation and politics. Such is the immense difference between our age and pagan ages.

(3.) *Separation: Importance of the Question—Proofs in favour of Separation—The Nature of Man and of the Gospel—Protection and Persecution—The Individual and Society with regard to Religion—Objections against Separation—The true relation of Church and State, and their results.*

He who does not share our convictions on this head neither understands man nor Christianity. He does not even know, or forgets, the lessons of history, which invariably shows us religion recovering new life in proportion as it withdraws out of the State's sphere of attraction, and the State withering and paralysing whatever it touches in the spiritual domain. When Bonaparte restored altars, he did not restore religion; she was recovering without him; he

stified her in the purple, and under his icy hand the sacred oil, that had begun to flow in the fire of trial, was soon seen to congeal again.

The distinction of the two spheres, political and religious, has made rapid way. Day by day it has become more severe and exacting. It is imperious, as truth ought to be; it is fertile as truth. . . . It was the want, the vague guess of all ages; it is the discovery and the glory of our own, which, with eyes raised to heaven, may legitimately exclaim, with the geometrician of Syracuse—*Eureka!*

Let us not then be told that we are amusing ourselves with a secondary question, or one of mere organisation; as we conceive of it, it is neither a matter of organisation nor of secondary importance; it affects the very foundations of religion, and, according to us, affects them to such a degree, that a doubt respecting the truth of that which we have dared to undertake the advocacy, would imply to our minds a doubt as to the truth of Christianity itself; for all the objections that we have ever heard urged against our principles have especially distressed us, as containing, although unconsciously to their promulgators, a secret distrust of Christianity, an implicit negation of the truth. We have always felt that the principles of our adversaries did it injustice, while ours rendered it homage.

Separation is the morality of the Church, or one section of it. The Christian Church, as well as the individual Christian, is called upon to come out of the world, and its manner of coming out of it is to

separate itself from the State. Such is its duty, and such the mode of that duty. It is not therefore with ecclesiastical policy, but with a moral question, that we deal. And what form in religion is more appropriate to life, comes more near to life, than morality? And how should any one dare to apply to this form, morality, the sentence we are now discussing: "the form does not give the life," since this form makes part of the life, since this form is the life itself. Can morality be put out of court by an argument like this? We ourselves, if our theory concerns morality, can we help pleading its cause, or can we plead it with too much ardour and persistency? Let people say whatever they will about the probable result of the situation that we wish the Church to occupy, we have nothing to do with balancing mere conjectures; the question regards a duty that the Church has long ignored, that the Church is at length to fulfil; and never can we be persuaded that in recalling the Church to its duty, we merely procure it a new *form*, and do nothing for its *life*.

If I could believe it were given to any one to have a perfect knowledge of the genealogy of his opinions, I should say that that of separation between Church and State sprang up in me from the simple consideration of human nature and the study of the Gospel.

The primary interest of a spiritual institution is to avoid all contact, and still more all commerce with a temporal institution, founded upon a principle so different to its own.

To identify the Church with the State is to forget, not only the fall, but the probation of man ; that is to say, the design of God, who has chosen to render man responsible, and could only do so by rendering him individual, and consequently, by making religion a matter of moral certainty, not overpowering evidence.

The Gospel had no need to protest against nationalism, for the Gospel is that very protestation, or rather, is a protestation against a religious system, of which nationalism is, in truth, only a form, or a manifestation—a confusion, namely, between the domain of nature and grace, the domain of matter and mind. In raising itself above this point of view, which is that of all human religion, and from which the Jewish even had not entirely freed itself, the Christian law struck from very far and from very high, and, as it were, unintentionally, at the system of nationality in religion, or of national religion. Absorbed in a more general idea, the latter was involved in the condemnation of that idea, without even coming in for the honour of being itself named.

In consequence of the original fall, or taking human nature as it is, there is a duality between man and society ; and upon certain points, to use scholastic language, this duality is irreducible. I am not surprised ; I am not much annoyed at its being denied. I should regret to see men make up their mind readily to the fact. I am almost glad that

they should exclaim against it. I only deny that it shows much maturity of mind to do this, and I am a little offended when it is a Christian who thus exclaims; for a Christian believes in a generic fall and in individual restoration. He has, therefore, not indeed exclusively, but eminently, reasons thoroughly to agree in our doctrine.

In every member of society there are two distinct beings, one of whom is by his physical nature and his temporal relations entangled in the bonds of civil society, and one who, as regards his faith and his hope, belongs only to God and to himself. The State has something to demand from the first, nothing from the second.

For all of us there is a birth according to the flesh, for a certain number a birth according to the spirit. Now civil society, which embraces without distinction all human individuals born on the same soil, is it born of the spirit or the flesh? We must either reply that it is born of the flesh, or efface from the Gospel the distinction between the two births. Consequently, then, the human individual, capable of a second birth, is endowed with a capacity which society does not share. So considerable a difference as this sufficiently attests that man and society are two.

The most brilliant periods of the Church were those when, denuded of all human help, it had entirely to depend upon the support of its God.

Christianity is only as pure as it possibly can be when it is separated from the world.

There is permanent opposition and hostility between Christianity on one hand, and the natural man on the other (I say the natural, and not the wicked or vicious man); so that, as long as the natural man shall be in force in the world, spiritual Christians will be in a state of proscription, and, in some respects, disinherited; whence it follows that their alliance, in their capacity of Christians, with a society on which the natural man impresses his character and his tendencies, is equivalent to a dialogue between two interlocutors who do not understand each other's language, to an association between two individuals divided in opinion and interest.

Every citizen is not a believer, but every believer is a citizen. Religious laws can only bind those who believe in them, but civil laws bind every man that lives among men. Accordingly, civil marriage is a civil and absolute obligation; religious marriage is only a relative and moral obligation.

Protection and persecution are only the forms of an idea, and the consequences of a principle,—the principle which brings religious conviction into any relation whatsoever with civil society. If this principle had not been established in men's minds, no one would ever have thought either of protecting or persecuting creeds. So long as it exists, however confusedly, men will at least protect, and in protecting they will persecute. As soon as society intervenes in favour of a religion,—in other terms, so soon as society

has a religion,—it may contest and refuse to individuals the exercise of their own, in virtue of the same principle on which expropriation for grounds of public utility is based. If, on the contrary, it abdicate this senseless claim; if, keeping out of the pale where religious parties struggle, it solemnly says to them, as Jesus Christ to the two disputants, “Who made me a ruler and a judge over you?” we do not positively decide that it will thereby render the recurrence of deplorable excesses perfectly impossible, but we think we may affirm that there will be an immense difference between excesses accidentally committed, and in flagrant violation of rights, and those same excesses admitted in principle, erected into dogmas, and passed into laws.

If the State, whose element is constraint, should bind its penal sanction, or the weight of its material influence, to the dogmas of the Church, and the Church on its side should impress a sacred character on the injunction of the civil power, there would no longer be any room for spontaneity, any asylum for liberty; the whole ground would be invaded, until thought, that no fetters can hold for ever, should force the State, or rather aid it, to free itself from the grasp of the Church. Thus came about, at the close of the middle ages, not the sudden death, but the slow decay of theocracy.

How right we seem to be when we are persecuted!
How wrong when we persecute!

In religion, the protection of civil authority adds no

strength to the strong, but it increases the weakness of the weak. It does not appeal to the spontaneity of the one, it stifles the little of it that the other had.

To accept protection for any belief whatsoever, is to accept, as a consequence, the right to persecute.

We will not have protection for the very reason that we resist persecution ; for, from the right to protect, there inevitably flows an equal right to persecute. Men may try to limit this right ; to cut it short at the point where protection ends ; to forbid its going beyond ; but this limitation is arbitrary, and it is impossible logically to say how the right of persecuting can be denied to society when once the right of protecting has been recognised. Even the idea of such limitation belongs to modern times. The days are not very distant when society, not indeed more reasonable, but certainly more logical, arrogated to itself and exercised that right, disputed in our time in virtue of a probably gratuitous distinction.

If the State be the man, it ought to persecute ; and in persecuting it does nothing more than fulfil the precept, " If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : if thy hand offend thee, cut it off."

The first service, or rather the first homage, that religion demands from you, the sign by which she will recognise you as her own, is your abstaining, in your character of earthly powers, from affording her your assistance : thus to aid is to betray her.

If persecution brings with it graces, of which times of peace know nothing, it has its dangers too, to which

peace is not exposed. In the tumult and dust of conflict, the forms of objects change or get obscured, the mind grows excited, and the flesh exasperated; and if on one side, one hemisphere of truth then disclose itself to our eyes, it is greatly to be feared that another veils itself. Made a spectacle to the world, to angels, to men, but above all to ourselves, we shall perhaps find some difficulty in guarding against pride.

If persecution endured have such dangers, what will not be the dangers of persecution courted, or what comes to the same thing, the dangers of a persecution to which we have not chosen to oppose the buckler of truth? No tribulation is good for us if, instead of coming from God, it comes from ourselves.

When an individual becomes a Christian it is through conviction; it is because he feels himself constrained to it; he yields to something stronger than, and yet one with, himself,—to conscience: but when the State becomes Christian it is not from conscience, since it has none; it is, however the case may be represented, from the consideration of the advantages expected from the alliance. Now, conformably with the nature of the State, these advantages cannot be the same that the Church pursues. This marriage is, therefore, on the part of the State a mercenary match, a match of interest and expediency. We know what is the fate of such unions.

The State, in order to suit man who has religion, ought itself to have none. Here is the difference

which constitutes harmony ; it is the absence in one of what is present in the other that makes their correspondence ; and the more the State wishes to be what only the man can be, the less will it represent him.

The individual alone knows religion as an end. To know religion as means is not to know it as religion ; it is necessarily to maltreat it. This is why, whether protecting or persecuting, the society that meddles with religion inevitably maltreats it.

Civil society, when it assumes a religious character, denies individuality, and consequently religion : the Church, on the contrary, sets out from the assumption of individuality, and it is on this condition that it deserves the name of a religious society.

Society is a being or a fact. There is no medium, and we must needs allow that if it be a being, man is not one ; if it be man, man is man no longer, has only the vain semblance of humanity. There can be no such thing as sharing ; the one necessarily becomes all that the other no longer is, the one ceases to be what the other becomes. If society be a being it is everything ; if not everything it is only a fact, and the man remains entire in man : we must absolutely choose here.

Society is not the whole of man, but only all men. Society is what all men share in common ; not all that one man can have in common with another man, but a portion more or less great, and in no case one which is by its nature inalienable. Society

amounts to this—A man seeking a support and a complement in another man, and offering himself to him under the same character.

The real persons of which a people is composed have placed in common all they could so place. This mass of interests and affections, of fears and hopes, of prejudices even, common to all, creates a kind of individual nationality; but the individual has never been able to throw into the common fund what does not belong to him, what was only given to him upon condition of never being alienated, what does not belong to his jurisdiction, but under whose jurisdiction he, on the contrary, is, namely, truth and God.

If there be in man as an individual an inalienable, inviolable element, which cannot form part of any community, it is clear that this element, remaining the peculiar property of each individual, withdrawn by him beyond the reach of any usurpation, will not be represented in the State on any condition, or under any form, and that the State will be man, if you will, but with this one element less. All consciences would need to be identical, or in other words, there would be in all men alike one and the same conscience, were it possible for it to transplant itself into the social institution and become its conscience. Now, evidently it is not so, unless society, in lieu of being a concourse of individualities, be their absorption, or rather their absolute negation.

The State cannot have a religion if individuals have one, and can only have one on condition of individuals having none, until a moral miracle shall reduce the consciences of all to union. But so long as this miracle do not take place, man remaining man, man having a religion, the State can have none.

Conscience would not be conscience were it to sacrifice even its weakest part. But to say truth, it has no part; it is one and indivisible. Now it must be with the conscience of society as with that of the individual, if indeed society have a conscience; it must be all or nothing. It absorbs, or rather, it denies that of the individual. Between the latter and society there intervenes social necessity for the protection of the society. Between society, furnished with a conscience, and the individual, there is no necessity in favour of the latter. The conscience of the great social unity cannot, without abdicating, admit the conscience of individual unity. The religion, I do not say of all, but of the whole, cannot admit the religion of only one, or of many.

If society have a religion, this is because it has a conscience; if it have a conscience, how should the conscience of the individual prevail against that of society? Conscience is sovereign in man. Now, should it not be sovereign in society? Alone with his conscience the man makes head against society. But how will you represent to yourself this man, opposed to society, having as such a conscience? It is impossible to oppose sovereignty to sovereignty,

omnipotence to omnipotence; impossible to suppose that from all the individual and various consciences a social conscience will result. What mystery, or rather what nonsense, are you proposing to us here! No; if society have a conscience at all, it is on condition of the individual having none; and conscience being the seat of religion, if society be religious, the individual is not so.

Our conscience does not rank among those possessions of which we may dispose at our pleasure: conscience is not ours, it is not even *we*; it is an authority residing within us; it is the organ of the Divinity in our souls; it is the supreme law, the law of laws. To give up our conscience is to give up God. Society may never exact this.

We may say that all religion deserving the name professes the sovereignty of conscience; for what is religion but a reservation made by the social man in favour of a portion of himself, that he neither will nor can yield up to political society, namely, his conscience? This is the vital principle of all religion, the refuge of individuality, which, without this, would be too easily absorbed into the social unity; so that we may well say, that without religion one of the most solid guarantees of human liberty would be irrevocably lost.

I, for my part, believe that if there be a dogma that threatens the existence of the State it is much rather the dogma of a blind and passive obedience, the dogma that annuls conscience. The true enemies

of the State are they who teach that when the prince speaks, conscience is to be silent, or who, strangely narrowing the arena of morality, profess that there is no absolute obligation but that of obeying the Government; that all other obligations have merely a relative value, and that the civil Government is the source and rule of all morality. These are the doctrines that ruin States.

Numbers signify little so long as it be not proved that numbers make truth; if this be not proved, all those individuals that are opposed to me amount only to one. I have never more than one before me at a time; I have only got to measure myself with the first, then the second, then the third, and so on; the question is only between me and another man, and the question thus put, it is evident that I am left free. One man in matters of religion is worth another, and no more; no one will pretend to tell me that that other man represents me; I can surely represent myself, and if I agree to his opinion on any subject soever, it is not to that man I submit myself, but to the truth.

Consciences cannot be agglomerated and weighed against consciences; it is always an individual opinion that is accidentally found to be the opinion of a certain number; nay, I go further, the opinion of a whole people, were it possible that one opinion could be common to all the individuals of which a people is composed, could no more be rendered authoritative on a single individual than can the

opinion of a single individual upon a whole people, unless the enormous paradox of numbers making truth be admitted; for the State can only urge in favour of its religious competence one of these two maxims,—either the State, as such, is in possession of truth, is inspired, is an apostle; or, number and force constitute truth. But if truth does not find its seal in numbers, I am right in drawing no distinction between the government of one man and many; and in all cases alike I see *one* man (whether he have many accomplices or not) obliging a people to put on his conscience; for such, on the part of each member of the Government, is the real fact, a fact of which each is aware and has the whole responsibility. Now the question is, do you admit that a man, in whom a certain opinion and temporal power are accidentally united, may make use of his power to impose his opinion; and that another man, succeeding to this power, but holding another opinion, may do the same? But the case would be still worse if, as has sometimes been the case, the man made use of his power to enforce an opinion that was not even his;—a driver amongst negroes submitted to the same despot; a slave scourging his companion in slavery! Such are the monstrous incongruities to which every system that gives to Government any competence whatever in matters of religion must necessarily descend.

If the State be the man, the State is religion; the State is, therefore, capable of comprehending and practising the precept that bids us turn the left

cheek to him that strikes the right. Let us be frankly told whether this be the morality that is to be taught to a political community.

If men persist in believing that the State represents the whole of man, the State must absolutely be the Church. This middle term, named *union*, which men would place between separation and identity, is purely chimerical; there can be no true way but identity or separation.

To realise the system which would place the whole man in the State, God must be present therein, or be believed to be present, and the heads of the State Church must verify by irresistible proof the divinity of their mission and the plenitude of their rights. Their laws must be oracles. But to show us the State, as State, choosing the Church is a pure contradiction. How should it choose the Church unless it be itself the Church? Will it be urged that in our system the individual chooses it? Yes, doubtless, at his own risk and for himself alone. But the State in the other system chooses for all. And how can it choose for all unless it be supposed that the conscience of all is subjugated by those striking evidences to which every man yields for the very reason that he is man?

Does the State know the truth? that is the question. For if it does not know it, it can neither teach it nor cause it to be taught. If, as a State, it does, this must be in virtue of a permanent inspiration, which places it in the position of prophet and

apostle ; and I am ready to consent to this, provided it be proved : but for all that, we shall be no further on, for what we shall have proved of one state will be denied as to all others, each state having its own doctrine, and it being impossible for truth to reside at the same time in several different or opposite doctrines. Consequently the right of the State to rule over men's consciences must remain founded solely on force, which has nothing in common with right.

Does the State as such know the truth ? If it knows it, it must know it better than any one, and each of us will do well to refer controverted points to its decision ; or rather there will be no controversies, the teaching of the State preventing them all.

No doubt it would be convenient to regard the executive power as the depositary of all political truths ; the clergy of all religions, the academies of all literary truths. This does, indeed, seem so convenient to many, that they will not entertain a doubt of such being really the case ; but in spite of their wishes nothing is less certain.

Until we are shown on the head of kings the tongue of fire that shone on the brow of the apostles, until the gift of miracles be conferred upon a government, we must reduce it—respectfully and confidently, however—to the office of defender of social morality ; and while taking upon ourselves the law of our eternal interests, we will entrust it with our temporal interests as citizens.

There is a truth, and the State is not its depositary. In order to know it, then, to whom is each one of us referred? To himself, undoubtedly. This does not mean that it is to be found in self, and that one is to have recourse to none other. No; but each listens and believes; each examines and judges; each compares and chooses; it is freely that each one submits. The conscience of the individual discovers the truth, and his will accepts the law of his conscience.

As for us, we say that truth is in God, and that from the Father of spirits it is communicated in silence and mystery, not to society, nor to the State, but to every spirit that humility and repentance have rendered fit to receive it. Self-abasement is the key of this treasure; the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.

The individual conscience, abstracting itself from every given state, every artificial situation, may seek for absolute truth, ought to seek for and to hope for it. To say the reverse would be tantamount to saying that there is *no* communication from God, no presence of God in man, consequently that no religion is possible: but society as such cannot have this aim nor this hope; it ought, therefore, while remaining in its own sphere, to leave the individual undisturbed in his; in a word, it has only got to inform itself about religion in so far as religion may manifest itself externally, by facts that interest society as such: it is these facts, not religion itself, which properly fall beneath its notice and within its domain.

It is unjust to render the individual responsible towards the State for what he is only responsible for to God; it is unjust to attribute to the association a competence with regard to the associated that it cannot exert; and it were exerting it to proclaim the following maxim:—"The State has a religion: thenceforth whoever does not belong to the religion of the State is not a citizen; or if he insists upon being thus at any price, he must needs affiliate himself to a worship that is not that of his own conviction."

How far the State is from taking possession of all the ground that lies between civil rights, properly so called, and the religious conscience! How far the civil law is from occupying the whole domain of natural morality or even of social morality! How many things in morals it abandons to the manner and custom of the day! How more and more definite the line of demarcation between sin and crime is made! Upon how many points formerly reputed to belong to it does it now keep silence! To see how increasingly narrow its sphere becomes, would one not say that the State must end by being only the responsible manager or official superintendent of a great undertaking, which, even from this point of view, one might continue to call the republic, that is, public *thing*?

It is important not to confound the two spheres of morality and law; for if morality be the support of the law in human consciences, if it may be summoned

to the aid of the law, nay, if the law can only have authority and permanence in so far as it respects morality, it is none the less true that law is not morality; for it has not for its direct end and only principle the absolute perfection of the human race; and wherever it has applied its own special method, which is constraint, to the development of that within the breast of man which should remain sovereign and free, it has shattered itself against an inevitable obstacle.

Society is you, is me, is all the world; is one, two, ten, a thousand men, many millions of men, but still of men, still of individuals, all responsible, all bound to what you are requiring from society, which, being itself impersonal, is bound to nothing.

The State, depending upon what there is of identical in all men, encloses them all alike; the Church, having sprung from an element which is not that of identity, only gathers into its breast those in whom she meets with that element.

We shall always protest against every formula which directly or indirectly gives to one, or to some, or to all, any right whatever over the truth: for the truth belongs to no one; the truth is God Himself; and we belong to Him, not He to us.

The State can only be the expression of the majority, and the majority is the world. To diminish or blunt the Gospel will always be the tendency of the State.

If you wait till society gives you religion, till society educates you, you may wait long. Do not wait. Let the universe rest awhile, and take care of yourself; the universe will be attended to by-and-bye. Think of yourself, since the question is of religion, that is, of the most individual of all things; the most social too, if you will, since it is the true cement of all societies; but also the least social as well, since it is born and dwells in the convictions of the individual. Be so good, first of all, to have a religion for yourselves, or if you do not want one for yourselves, but only for all the world, oblige us by not wanting one at all. That is not a religious soul which views religion as pre-eminently a social interest, and in whom that interest alone originates the idea and the desire of a religion. Here socialism is at fault, and contradicts itself; it feels the want of religion, that is to say, of a spontaneous life of the conscience; and it insists upon society, which it views as antecedent to religion, making a present of a religion to each of its members, as though it were a manor, a plough, or an acre of ground. Man wishes to make a religion, and not to receive; and if so, he does not want a religion.

Christianity has patiently gravitated from individuals to the mass. It does not pretend to a Christian society in the first place, in order afterwards to have Christian individuals. Socialism, which is not patient (*patiens quia æternus*), wants, first of all, a moral society which shall provide for the formation

of moral individuals. This seems the shorter way, but what is impossible is always very long! We must believe that the emptiness, the fallacy, the danger of these theories will soon strike all eyes. But everything has its reason, even the unreasonable, and the successive rise and fall of the different socialist schools is not an insignificant phenomenon.

The Christian philosopher should take heed to it. Weary and disgusted of all chimeras, he should still remount to their source, and find there some warning for himself. The socialistic or social point of view is contained in Christianity, because Christianity contains everything. If some exaggerate this principle, others perhaps completely overlook it. It is a point to which the friends of religious progress should turn their attention.

No doubt the State—that is, the political institution—is the condition of all human developments, and of religious development, which is the first of all; but this does not imply that the State should take in hand the management of this interest. Let religion inspire morals, let morals dictate the laws; that is the natural progression, that is the true method; that, too, the adequate means. And the power of the Church will not be more displayed—on the contrary, it will be less so—by employing the State than in dispensing with it.

The State itself, the State taken in the simple fact of its existence, is an instinctive and unpremeditated application of the great principles of division of labour. The State is only one of the

forms of humanity, or one of the institutions of God in humanity ; it is the platform, the theatre, the shelter of all the developments of the moral creature ; the enclosure behind which man labours to accomplish his destiny ; in a word, the condition of all that we are, but not its principle or its source.

Obliged to choose between two theories of the State, we declare that we are not for the revival of the State of the Greeks ; we are for liberty, and consequently for the modern State. Now this latter does not aim at realising within itself a unity, which only ought and only can be realised in man ; consequently this State very naturally leaves the Church outside of itself. And there is all the more reason for making over to the individual, *among other things and before all*, his religion, that this religion, absolutely unlike all that in ancient time bore the name, is not of a nature to seek to form part of, and lose itself in, that indivisible fund which is the domain of the State. This religion, that proclaims a jealous God, is itself a jealous religion ; it takes alarm at all that attacks its inviolable liberty ; it will only owe the friends and auxiliaries it needs to its own free choice, and is much more afraid of being helped inopportunely than unjustly oppressed.

What is most formidable to liberty is not so much an institution which warns while threatening it, as an institution which, while affecting to recognise, in fact denies the very principle of this liberty. The society that wants to deprive me of my religion

alarms me much less than the society that wants itself to have one. A constitution that makes the State religious, makes me irreligious in so far as I consent to this constitution.

What idea is entertained of religion when even its liberty is feared,—that, namely, which is only refused to verified and recognised evil? Why, this is to try religion as a recognised and verified evil. And if, instead of exterminating it as such, it be protected, adopted, and associated with the State, what else is this than to proclaim that this acknowledged evil is at the same time incurable, and that the guardians of society, unable to extirpate the scourge, take upon themselves its administration in order to watch over it, modify, and to repress it, much as in certain countries the Government takes under its own care and responsibility gambling-houses and some other establishments?

We know very well that all evil comes from sin; and if that be all, here we have politics, laws, even medicines, summed up in a word, or suppressed. As for me, I hold that, sin existing, we must give it as little hold as possible; we must not favour it by institutions, must even erect institutions that may serve as a check to it.

“Let us live,” recently exclaimed an author, with regard to the ecclesiastical system we advocate—“let us live, and let them argue.” It is very right to determine to live, and when the proof resulting from the life shall be complete, that is to say, when it shall

be proved that the ecclesiastical system that is opposed to ours has as good individual and general effects as ours aspires to produce, the discussion will be at an end ; or if it has not begun, it will not begin. But if under certain conditions life be a proof, if in certain cases it puts an end to all possible doubt, it must first of all exist,—exist in a measure, a universality, a superiority, which, as it were, causes the very arena of the discussion to vanish away. But it is allowed with laudable humility that this proof, this annihilation of all doubt, is wanting. We conclude thence that, even putting out of the question numerous and important facts, which throw doubts in the minds of the most thoroughly convinced on this subject of the union of Church and State, the time is not come for holding arguments cheap. People may, if they will, refrain from taking up the question of principles ; they may even refuse to discuss it at all ; but to engage to prove the contrary of a doctrine by an appeal to an unknown future and an uncertain experience is a system that has, in our opinion, no other merit to commend it than that of novelty.

Much is said about the services that national Churches have rendered. What ! because under this form of government the Church has not absolutely died—because some rays of the ancient faith, some sparks of the ancient flame, have continued to shine—because the substance has proved stronger than the form constantly engaged in stifling and extinguishing it, we are to impute to this system all the good that

it has not been able to prevent, and praise it for all the evil it has not had the power to do! "But," it is said, "in the national Church the pastor has a ready-made flock, the flock is provided with a pastor before they have asked for one!" Why, do you not see that this is the very evil we protest against, and that you would do much better to leave to that flock the task of finding a pastor, to the pastor the care of forming for himself a flock? Can you not see that, in matters of religion, spontaneity is the very principle of life, and that all that is taken away from the one is so much necessarily lost to the other? When we have to do with material needs, it is their satisfaction that is the great point: with regard to spiritual needs, it is the need itself that is of primary importance; and before we prepare the aliment, we must first occupy ourselves in creating the appetite. Now this cannot be the affair of the State, or if this be its affair and its duty, it cannot better fulfil it than by standing aloof and doing nothing.

Certainly the State is very innocent of all of great that has ever been undertaken or performed in matters of religion during the era of alliance; and everything proves that it would have taken place equally and better without it.

Look, we are told, at the spiritual languor, the profound torpor of the masses, and then say if a national Church be not necessary. What then? Is it no longer a sure test to judge of the tree by its fruit? Nay, more, is the rule now to be the finding the tree

good because its fruits are evil? We are to retain national Churches on account of the infidelity of their produce! You say to us, Look what the Church is, in spite of the institution that binds it to the State. Why do you not rather say, Look at what the Church is *because* of the institution that connects it with the State?

Uniformity is not the seal of truth, but that of falsehood, or at least, of fiction. In such a sphere as this, life cannot go on without diversity; it is the life that engenders the diversity. And if the institution of State Churches boasts of realising on a large scale the phenomenon of uniformity, it condemns itself by that very circumstance alone.

If it be for the interest of society to have religious citizens, it is in no way to compromise, but rather to further this interest, to desire that religion should be free, and consequently entirely independent of the State.

Nowhere will the State show itself less atheistic than in countries where there is no constitutional religion.

We are very glad that each profession and each art should be exercised in a Christian spirit; we go so far as to exact this, but we cannot exact that each one of the professional undertakings, each one of the products of art, should be a direct and explicit expression of the Christianity of the professional man or the artist; and in the same way we rejoice that the statesman should be a Christian, we even abso-

lutely require it from an ideal point of view, but without pretending that he should employ his official authority to give to Christian doctrines an official authority that does not belong to them. He may be entirely Christian, entirely faithful, without that; nay, he will but be the more faithful, for to overpass fidelity is only another way of being unfaithful.

The union of the Church with the State is so grave, so complicated a fact, one that so modifies all portions of social existence, and even the conditions of the individual, that the evil it has done becomes an obstacle to the correction of that evil, just as slavery seems to have rendered slaves incapable of becoming free. Man would be much to be pitied if evil became a guarantee of evil. The cure of an old abuse is always painful, and on the condition of not introducing any disturbance in society, no reform could ever take place.

If we are asked, What do you wish religion to become without the support of the State? we simply reply, Let it become what it can, let it become what it ought to become; let it live if it be capable of living, let it die if it is to die; *sit ut est, aut non sit.*

Has then the edifice of religion so slight a hold that, detached from political institutions, it must needs at once crumble away? However low the religious temperature of a people—if I may be allowed that expression—the religious want is general. Under all possible institutions, nothing is more popular than religion. A religion which asks itself whether it

does not need the civil power, confesses that it has no faith in itself.

If it were true that religion was not to survive its forced and artificial relations with the State, if it were even true that its conditions were to become worse by the facts of this separation, we might as well abandon it at once, and seek in some old error, or some new system, the consolation of that secret and profound misery that up to the present time, by the aid of a wise policy, had been so gently and graciously soothed.

Suppose the Church never to have been united to the State, where is the Christian who would not exclaim at the idea of the union were it now proposed?

It is difficult to believe that earnest Christians should conceive of the protection of political power as the only condition of existence of a religion founded upon the Rock of ages. If they be Christians, they are doubtless not insensible to the solemn and sublime delight of feeling themselves tempest-tossed in a bark that can never perish.

Would not the moral force that enlisted the State in its service have always proved sufficiently strong without the State?

The national, or rather the official ritual being suppressed, do you believe that the multitude, such as you know it, will give itself a new one? No; this multitude as it is now will not do so, but most certainly the multitude as it shall have been

made by a new situation will; it is this that is overlooked. How precarious the position of pastors will be! Why so, if this liberty gives to the flock a more serious sentiment of religion and public worship, and if they attach themselves to institutions that are of their own making, and for which henceforth they will have to answer?

To those who tell me it is not the institutions, it is sin that does the harm, I reply, Never then speak against the Catholic institution as an institution.

What Christianity effected before its alliance with the State was the conquest of the State. There, at least, is one work that it has accomplished alone and without the concurrence of the State. Now this work was more difficult and greater by itself alone than all those it has been able to do since. It is not, therefore, possible to suppose that it could not have accomplished without association all that it has done under the associated system.

The separation that we are urging does not threaten to intercept the current that causes morality to flow like fresh and pure blood throughout the whole social body; nothing of the kind; this separation has no such aim, nor could the State, even if it would, prevent itself from being thus permeated and penetrated. Under this supposition, as well as any other, the morality of the State will continue that of the conscience, that of religion; the separation will resemble those natural barriers that mark the confines of two States, but do not prevent their atmospheres

from intermingling; the realms of the air have no frontiers.

New relations between religion and the State will spring up from the very suppression of the legal relations that existed between them: religion only secedes to unite more perfectly; only recovers possession of its own special power to apply it with more energy to the moral wants of society, by acting, not as before, by the body on the members, but henceforth by the members on the body.

Religion, which from without enveloped the State, is no longer now without; it is in the centre, from whence it permeates and nourishes the State. It is no longer the flesh that covers the skeleton, it is the heart whence the blood flows, giving life to the whole body. And it is only on condition of being within—that is, of being purely spiritual—that it can thus circulate and be truly its own self.

Man has such a need of religion, that if you do not by a fatal combination make him view religion as a political machine, or sacerdotal manœuvre, he will render it some homage, will enter into some relations with it. He only waits to greet it till he encounters it in the solitude, the deprivation, and the majesty of independence.

Man has wants whose satisfaction, sorrows whose consolation, can only be found in heaven. Man without religion is the uprooted tree whence the sap retires. He will be religious if only he be allowed to be so,—religious, if you will, in an elementary way;

at all events, it is certain that if religion show itself to him alone, it has chances of being welcomed, chances that it loses when it presents itself to him in *bad company*.

Wherever man is left free to provide himself with a religion, he will have one: this want is universal, profound, inextinguishable; and what disguises it from you is this very institution, which not only does not give conscience time to speak, time to feel itself, but which, by making religion and worship proceed from the State, teaches us to place worship and religion on a level with the most ordinary worldly practices and social observances.

We do not deny that the Church separated from the State may not become powerful, and in one sense more powerful, we doubt not, than under the system of the union; but the power will be one of persuasion, of which no one can fairly complain, and which, separated from all alloy and all external means, remains as pure as a thing can be. Powerful in the State and by the State, its power would be of a different nature, and would have quite other consequences. Against the former corrupt power we must protest and wrestle; the latter is but the power of opinion: the arms are equal, and it is truth that gives the victory. Should we dare to demand more than this?

Religion renders great services to a State, but it only renders them inasmuch as it is free; as a slave it is worth nothing, the salt has lost its savour.

The absolute separation of the spiritual and the

temporal, of the Church and the State, removes obstacles, takes a fatal snare away, but does not change the heart of man. Every one who loves his chains will keep them; every one who wills to be a slave will remain one. Liberty cannot be imposed. For servile souls the terrorism of opinion will succeed to direct or indirect legal constraint.

Everywhere, when the State remains neutral between several religions, their divergences, although sensibly felt, do not trouble the peace, nor create many nations within the one. National unity is never destroyed by religion, but only on account of it, or under its name; that is to say, when institutions create a political rivalry between the different modes of worship, then, no doubt, two religions do make two peoples.

The nation and national unity are at the circumference; conscience and unity of faith are in the centre. Man does not carry all the depth of his being into the region of politics. He can—nay, as member of the body corporate he ought, to withhold many things; and although he be indeed most heartily a citizen, though he may feel himself in this respect in a sort of communion with those who love the same country, yet all his heart, all his inner life, does not expand itself in this relation; the best, the most intimate portion of his nature remains in reserve, for ends with regard to which the State is but a means and a condition; but still, what he brings of his moral life into political relations suffices for the purpose and interests of the association, and

national unity has no need to strike its roots in a deeper soil.

If there be any means of advancing religious unity in any degree, or at least of maintaining through all difference of creed the union of citizens as such, this means is liberty. Now in this order of facts equality is the complement, equality is an integral part of liberty.

Everywhere, when an impetus is given to democracy, it must be given also to religion ; religion may of itself take the initiative, but it will become popular, national, powerful, only when it ceases to be an affair of State.

The Church before the State—this is the proper order. So soon as there be any question of rank between her and the State, the superiority is incontestably hers, and she can only renounce it by denying her nature. Independent or sovereign, one or the other she must be.

3. *Politics.*

(1.) *Politics and Christianity—Right and Duty— Relative Character of Political Truth.*

There are Christian schools which have believed themselves obliged to deduce from the theological doctrine of the fall the political dogma of absolute power ; the socialists in their conclusion appear to coincide with these schools, and nevertheless, strange to say, they profess to hold the integrity of human nature. And yet could they treat man differently if

they believed him without a soul, as irreparably corrupt? Christianity has a different logic; bold, but divinely bold. It proclaims the fall of man, and yet calls him to liberty; claims to restore him by liberty, or at least makes liberty the basis of his restoration. This liberty is not political, but it leads to political liberty, to liberty of every kind.

Political controversies are a dangerous snare to the Christian. Too often he loses in them the independent judgment, the impartiality, the moderation, that ought to characterise him among men. In love with order, he tends to arbitrariness; jealous of liberty, he sanctions fearful excesses, and finds himself making common cause with the enemies of the faith. Let him rise above these disturbances, let him contemplate these distresses and convulsions through the pure light of eternity.

Is there any one political state more in harmony than another with the accomplishment of the Divine purpose? Yes; it is that where man has the disposal of a measure of liberty proportioned to his whole responsibility as man, and where the abuses of this liberty meet, in the strength of the Government and the wisdom of the laws, a sufficient counter-balance and obstacle. Far from absolute equality being essential to this purpose, there may be inequalities that promote it, and which, therefore, all Christians willingly accept, even if it be to their individual detriment. Equality before the law is the only one that is absolutely true.

The public man may be a Christian, may act in his character of Christian, without a fear, if his wisdom be first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easily entreated—without, I say, a fear of seeing his talents and capacity thrown away. I do not promise him popularity ; I do not guarantee him from all reverses : but let him once remember that the germ of a victory is contained in every defeat undergone for God's cause ; let him also remember that, whatever may be the aversions of the wise of this world for the counsels of Christianity, the world is so made that Christianity ever finds its opportunity in the life of society, and that its counsels end by being followed even without being accepted.

Duty is individual ; right is not, because it is a mode of living agreed on or recognised by many—a more or less equitable sharing of social benefices and burdens. Moreover, right implies, over and above duty, a public force.

Does right, which metaphysically engenders duty, always awaken the sentiment of duty ? Alas ! the contrary too often appears ; and in many cases, merely to proclaim a right suffices to extinguish or weaken the desire to exercise it.

If circumstances made it our interest to live and speak openly at the cost of all our secrets ; if the motive led us to force out the whole mystery of our soul, the very fact of its not being duty that provoked this manifestation would prevent its being sincere or authentic, it would not deserve to be

trusted ; and the very man who had just performed this act of pretended openness could never feel sure of having said his real thought ; the principle that determined him must needs have deteriorated from the limpidity of the stream. Can any man be positive that what has been said from interest has not been also distorted by interest ? It is only the felt presence and influences of duty which can guarantee the purity of the revelations it has prompted.

It is when we communicate ourselves from duty that we may rely on our own sincerity.

It is this principle of life and health that modern democracy lacks.

A Christian knows his civil rights under the name of *functions* ; it is the rights of others that it behoves him to know as *rights*.

Give to a people good morality, domestic relations, and ordinary circumstances, and you will see whether you have not, even without talking politics, given to that people political morality as well.

In point of fact, we say, despite the examples quoted, that political morality is deduced from social morality, is proportioned thereto, may be judged thereby ; and that generally, he who in one of these two spheres is penetrated with the holiness of duty equally acknowledges and adores it in the other ; so that to create private virtues is to create public as well, and to form the family man is to prepare the patriot.

In order to be touched by the right of others as by my own, it is necessary that I should be pene-

trated with respect for the law that has established both,—for the law of justice ; I must be at least as sensible of my duty to others as of their duty to me ; I must love equality as much in their interests as in my own.

To love one's *own* right is a very different thing from a love of *the* right. We only love this inasmuch as we love the rights of others.

When truth obtains a privilege she does not rise, she descends. Her glory as well as her strength is to draw everything from herself, to owe nothing save to herself. She does not degrade herself by insisting upon rights, for rights are a part of order, and order is a part of truth. She does not degrade her dignity in claiming, like every other human thought, her place in the sunshine. She neither desires to invite nor encourage men to treat her unjustly. She does not presume upon their injustice, but begins by supposing them just. To renounce the exercise of a right when a general interest is at stake, is a way of trampling right itself under foot.

Passivity, which is another kind of activity, is only legitimate and praiseworthy when activity, properly so called, has become impossible ; to enter into passivity before the resources of our rights are exhausted is, like the young hero of old, to leave the ranks before the signal is given, and to devote to the paternal vengeance a laurel-crowned brow.

No tribulation does us good if, instead of coming to us from God, it originates with ourselves. Instead,

then, of awaking persecution when it sleeps, or expediting it when it lingers, believers ought to prevent its return by all expedients compatible with perfect loyalty; and to be consistent in this principle, they ought openly to claim liberty, and the guarantees of liberty.

My right in every sphere is exactly the same as that which all others claim for themselves; and their right has the same extent as that which I myself pretend to. I have only the rights I acknowledge in them; and as soon as I refuse them theirs, I relinquish mine—as soon as I assert my own right, I assert theirs. The law has intervened to keep up this equilibrium; it has not created these rights, but has only respectfully recognised and done homage to them; it has taken on itself the task of arbitrating between these various rights, in order that all should be preserved, or at least that none should be violated without reparation. But it is none the less true that my right is the measure of that of others, and their right the measure of mine.

With things we do what we will, with men what we can. The human mind is a stubborn material; the soul is like fire, it will take no other form except that which it gives itself. This is the saving truth in politics.

Nothing in politics is true otherwise than relatively; there is only one absolute truth—pole-star, around which heaven revolves. There are even some great errors which seem to have been of use to the

human race; but yet it was not they, it was the truth mingled with them. It is only in the central truth that there is neither approximation, uncertainty, nor mutability.

Political life can no more be guaranteed by charters than confidence between individuals can be advantageously replaced by contracts written, signed, and sealed. On the contrary, these charters, like all contracts, prove that confidence does not exist; and the aim of all our efforts should be to render them ever less necessary, and at length quite useless. Charters are but the provisional props of an ill-founded building.

These reflections are so far from contesting the present necessity and advantage of written constitutions, that they seem to us, on the contrary, their justification.

Falsehood and corruption, even when they occupy a throne, do not come from God.

(2.) *Functions and Mission of the State—Thoughts on Politics.*

I anticipate as an epoch blessed in its principle, or blessed in its effects, that in which the Governments will give nothing more than the protection of all liberties.

A Government which should only meddle with what belonged to it is still one of those bold hypotheses which are only put forward with a kind of fear. And yet the temerity really exists

in the idea of charging a few men with all the burden of the moral and intellectual wants of a nation.

Society has not formed itself so much with the view of distributing to each a satisfying portion of social power as of guaranteeing to each the free use of his individual faculties. Every constitution is good that offers this guarantee.

Individual rights—that is to say, the free development of the liberties of each, without any other limit than the perfectly equal rights of all the other members of the society,—these are the essential objects of political association.

What is society, if not an institution that we have established the better to protect our rights? This constitutes the only special right it has. A simple depositary of the rights of all, how should it find itself in possession of a right that none of its members shares?

There is no public spirit where individuals carelessly refer to the Government the foundation of all establishments for the general good. Government cannot suffice for so many cares, and the good to be done is immense; its principal function is to protect and to smooth the way for the zeal of citizens. Let Governments govern; that is enough: if public spirit reign among citizens, their zeal will do the rest.

The duty of the statesman is not only to listen to public opinion, but to correct it when necessary.

We can do nothing without it, but we must not let it do everything.

The protection to inoffensive minorities is the noblest attribute and the very mission of Government.

Without respect to the minorities there would not be any tyranny in the world more insupportable than the government of the majorities; but in the sphere of spiritual interests this tyranny, or, if you will, this *indelicacy*, would be doubly odious.

It is forgotten that indirect constraint resembles indirect arguments, which are lost in eloquence; it is like indirect taxation, which is lost in administration. It is good policy not to render immediately obligatory what may in another way be admitted as indispensable.

Political ideas cannot fail to introduce in a very short space of time, and we hardly know how, great changes in private life.

The formation of political society is at most a moral and not a spiritual fact.

All parties have their populace; must all parties have their saints? If ever the lives of such saints be written, they will not fill fifty-three folio volumes, like the collection of the Bollandists.

A law is never simply inefficacious; if it do not destroy an evil, it augments it. When a legislator comes into collision with the force of facts he not only meets with resistance, but energetic reaction. When a law remains unexecuted, the fault lies in the legislator. A law that cannot be observed is a

bad law. The legislator must either withdraw it or himself withdraw.

Injustice once admitted into laws is not easily got out again. It is a dangerous precedent if men do not make haste to efface it ; and as everything hangs together in error as in truth, in evil as in good, it is very rare only to commit one injustice at a time.

To judge without law is to persecute.

I shall not wait to pronounce against a law whose principle is iniquitous till I see it translated into action ; I shall not have recourse to the translation when I can read the text.

There are people who adopt a law in the hope that it will not get itself executed ; this is neither reasonable nor right. If a law is to remain unexecuted, is it not better not to make it at all ? This pretended argument in favour of the law is the strongest argument against it.

It is of the domination over souls that despotism, whether that of the prince or the people, is especially greedy.

Of all empires, none flatters ambition so much as the empire over minds. There are few heads of a nation that have not courted it, that have not made efforts to extend their rule beyond material interests.

There is nothing that so degrades a body corporate (as well as an individual) as the acceptance of an odious function.

What proportion can there be between any crime soever and the sentence by which, virtually precipi-

tating a sinner to the feet of his Supreme Judge, we pronounce, we creatures of an hour, upon the eternal destinies of our fellow-creatures ?

We are not worthy to govern men when we are familiar only with the inferior portions of their nature ; we are deficient in the first premises when we do not believe in the power of ideas ; and there are no secular politics but those which take the soul and the conscience into account.

We may be sure that every life cast, without reservation, into the political stream is a superficial life ; and this is why, in spite of its pretensions, our age is deficient in profundity. It is not by political affections, only or principally, that the political institutions can be restored. We must seek far deeper into human life in order to find the germ of renovation for our failing society.

(3.) *Governors and Governed—Theocracy—Democracy—Government of the Middle Classes—Of Small Political Societies.*

In any State soever the governed are bound to obedience, the governors to justice. This truth may be looked at from two points of view :—

First, then, from the religious. Each party is responsible to God, the master alike of subjects and of masters ; and the infraction of the duties of the one does not authorise a similiar infraction on the part of the other. Well observed on both sides, this

principle should render the people secure from tyranny, the authorities from sedition. Always, in point of fact, it is by the *grace of God* that sovereigns rule; and these words should serve as a guarantee alike to governed and governors. If it has been chiefly applied for the advantage of the latter, this is because between the two evils of anarchy and despotism we have had to choose the least, because every form of government has been judged better than anarchy, and the sacred character of the governing is the only certain barrier against it.

From a civil point of view governments and peoples have mutual obligations. This second contract is sometimes written out; but if it be not so, it is neither less real nor less worthy of respect. Having neither sanction nor arbitrator on earth, it finds its conditions in the wants of society. It is tacitly agreed on both sides, that if we advance beyond a certain limit, which for the people is that of patience, for the authorities that of necessity, there must infallibly be conflict and disruption. In both cases it is always society that, mindful of its preservation, provides for it by a violent effort, and thus frees itself from its perils, from whichever side they come.

So much for the principle; now, then, for the fact. A people (a form including governors and governed) may be compared to the alphabet, which contains a few vowels and many consonants. The vowels are the governors, the consonants the governed. And just as human speech, with all its life and power, only

arises from the intimate union and constant inter-lacing of consonants with vowels, so too the life of a people only results from the active and real concurrence, the organic union, of the governed with their rulers. If we were ever so anxious to deny these truths, we think we should find it totally impossible to do so.

God, who is the legitimate proprietor of all powers, re-claims them all. He takes back from human legislators the position of authority He had entrusted them with, and declares that He himself will execute it. He himself dictates the laws; not only the moral, but the civil, economical, ceremonial. He descends to all the details of State administration; kings are but, strictly speaking, His lieutenants and agents. His action does not limit itself to a first impression; it is continued; it bears upon all objects; it renews itself constantly; it is the *theocracy*.

The theocracy, in the full sense of the word, only exists under the two forms of the State calling itself the Church, or the Church calling itself the State. Until the Reformation it was rather under this last form that the theocracy sought to establish itself.

This rule of theocracy, the true and only true one if we regard the idea of which it is the symbol, namely the sovereign right of God himself, is nevertheless, in respect to its actual application, only a symbolic and provisional rule, since man only rises to his full dignity through liberty, and the rule of the theocracy restrains and suspends liberty.

On the Lex Talionis.—In all departments of duty, in all the relations of life, God identified Himself with the law, declared Himself the offended by every offence, the plaintiff in every suit. He concentrated, as it were, all claims in Himself; He absorbed in Himself the cause of each, the right of all. It was thenceforth understood that God himself was robbed by every larceny, insulted by every outrage, injured by every homicide. Retaliation became the centre of penal legislation, because men had not to deal with men who can pardon, but with the very law itself, which cannot, or with God, who is the law. Thus is explained and justified that law of retaliation, against which such objections have been raised, because it has not been looked at from its proper point of view.

We see nothing in common between a people as such and the truth. Truth cannot present itself, cannot dwell except in the individual, inasmuch as the individual is alone organised, I do not say to create, but to perceive the truth. Nationality left to itself is not qualified for the part men would make it play. But I do not say this of nationality placed in an extraordinary condition by an extraordinary dispensation. Such a measure may communicate to a people, not, indeed, the nature and attributes of an individual, but an aptitude for receiving, preserving, and transmitting the deposit of truth. God takes this people to Himself; makes of it His own people in the strictest acceptance of the word; and in the first place He draws it out of the mire as He drew the first man, and appro-

priates it to Himself in a quite special sense and authentic manner; speaks to it as one man speaks to another; makes it hourly feel His presence; proves it by miraculous signs; governs and directs it immediately;—in a word, He replaces for this people conviction by evidence, and I would even say faith by sight, if such a substitution could take place absolutely without annihilating human morality with the faith which in every case and every sense is its principle. It is this extraordinary rule to which is given the name of theocracy, or personal government of God.

Radicalism is only the pioneer of socialism.

The instinct of centralisation is not peculiar to monarchies; and who knows if, in the absence of a sensible and living unity, it be not far more keenly the want of democracies?

Democracy, regarded in our day as the ultimate and normal condition of society, is perhaps only an important crisis, a transitory state, that it has to pass through. The epithet of Christian does not alter the case; in such an alliance of words the substantive chooses its adjective.

We no more understand the Divine right of all than the Divine right of one, if it be true that society has an objective end, an object superior to itself, and that, instead of being a simple association of interests, a compromise between passions, it is bound to realise the just and the true. Now in many cases the just and true would be sacrificed if they could become

questions of mere majority. A certain thing desired by the greatest number is neither just nor *social* by that alone; on the contrary, it may be execrable and subversive of all society; and were it the will of all against one, it ought not to be done. If it be said that certain objects will naturally be reserved and placed under shelter, this is a vicious circle at which one can but smile; would not a conviction be needed to insure this, and in the first instance a deliberation, in which, as in all others, the majority would decide?—and on what? On the absolutely true. Strictly speaking, there is no true system except theocracy, which yet is not a system, but a fact, and not even an ordinary and constant fact, but a miracle. What is to be done, however? for we must needs arrive, and in order to arrive, we must start. Some think that it is not the starting-point, but the way and the end which are of consequence; others insist upon the starting-point being founded in right, and they will only see right in the absolute equality of all, and the equal participation of all in the government of society.

This is what is *par excellence* the democracy that Thucydides 2,200 years ago defined in these terms:—“As our Government is not in the hands of a small number of citizens, but in the hands of the majority, it has received the name of democracy.” Thucydides would not have called the actual Government of France (1841) democratic; and France, on its side, which knows no slaves on its territory, would not call the republic of Thucydides a democracy.

After all, the nature of things is the principle of principles ; and the nature of things which is not an abstraction, but a living fact, always ends by prevailing over abstractions.

The religion of democracy divides itself into two inimical sects,—the one having for its watchword the successive admission of all capacities in measure as they display themselves ; the other, the supposition, not perhaps of the capacity, but of the right of all, capable or not capable, in virtue of their quality of human beings, males and adults.

As a system, and from the purely logical point of view, the latter of these theories (against which, however, we shall have to urge a very grave difficulty) has perhaps some advantage over the former, to which it may always address the embarrassing objection—The people on whom you confer the right of verifying and measuring capacities ought first of all to be challenged, for they are at once judges and interested parties ; and their whole task, fairly estimated, would reduce itself to this,—the exclusion of the greater number, and the taking firm possession of authority for themselves and their party. This conquest indeed establishes an actual power, but not a right.

It is with the political problem as with a curve whose extremities vainly seek to unite ; Providence leaves them at a distance from each other : God is silent, but He incessantly makes the general enlightenment and the action of Christianity come to lead us out of this labyrinth. He takes upon Himself

to resolve, by facts, questions insoluble in themselves. Society under this double influence, which does not shield it, but mitigates its inevitable shocks, advances, not only towards an equitable distribution of power, but towards the equality of political rights, under cover of this great victory of the equality of social rights. It is not doubtless in the equality of political rights that society will find its resting-place (for in certain times and certain given circumstances it may only find trouble and war therein), but rather in *the truth of this equality*; in other words, in the equality of the capacities which correspond to the elementary or primary exercise of political power.

The monopoly of power by the middle class would bequeath no grand result to history; a purely commercial republic would only produce commercial results; it is to the aristocracy, or the absolute democracy, that the sublime in politics belongs; and if it be true that the time of the aristocracy is past, middle class policy will never rise above itself, except by changing from middle class to popular.

The ideas of the middle classes are too special, I do not say to contribute, but to suffice to the greatness of a nation. It is alike higher or lower, though under different aspects and impulses, that what we may call, in contradiction, general ideas will be found.

The existence of small political societies has not less poetry, and sometimes not less celebrity, attached

to it than that of great States. The history of the former often possesses a striking character that the history of empires lacks. It is more completely the history of human liberty; the other, rather that of destiny and Providence; and, whatever may be the interest of the latter aspect for the contemplative mind, men in general find a greater fascination in destinies which seem to have shaped themselves, and to have only conceded to the necessity of things that which the human will absolutely cannot refuse it.

It is only liberty, spontaneity, and moral energy that ennoble the destinies of small States, and can make us love their history.

III.—EDUCATION.

1. *Education and Christianity—Thoughts on Instruction and Education—Education of Things and of Books—Public and Private Education.*

It is the Christian alone who can fully appreciate the dignity of instruction. It is the heir of heaven that he is forming in his schools; it is with reference to a spiritual and eternal happiness that he teaches the child to read and write; his masters are in some sort apostles, his pupils proselytes, his schools temples, the knowledge that he imparts is the knowledge of God.

We must not, however, mistake: if Christianity be useful to education, it is by educating the educators, it is by giving them a good moral temperament, and

the simple sentiment of the same truths that observation suggests and reflection counsels; but it does not replace education, or dispense with it.

Even for the Christian there is an art of education, an art which calculates upon human nature, rests upon it, accepts its aid as freely as it acknowledges its obstacles. If Christian education differ considerably from all other, it is not by taking for its starting-point a supernatural state, for which, as a general principle, it provides and prepares. It recognises, accepts, cultivates nature; addresses itself to the will and the reason; acts by example and habit; establishes the rights and the elements of law and morality, so that the child, not all at once and prematurely pouring out its moral life into the abyss of grace, may accustom itself to the reality of the law, become penetrated with what of special value it possesses, may pass under the hands of John the Baptist before it reaches Christ.

We should only, alas! be strictly true in imputing to certain religious methods which pride themselves upon their rigid fidelity, the visible decline of Christian discipline in many and many a house which in other particulars is taxed with over-rigour. There is a certain piety, high-coloured, loud-toned, severe of aspect, which despises education, and occasionally raises to the dignity of a system the mere weakness of the mind, and the unfaithfulness of indolence. In a word, though we remain convinced that it is around some Christian hearths that the most correct repre-

sentation of the family type may be found, we are obliged to own that many Christian households might profit by the example of worldly households, strangers, or even perhaps hostile, to evangelical convictions.

A country should draw the essential portion of its culture from its own breast: we do not expatriate our minds with impunity; a culture too completely foreign may become as pernicious to the country into which it is imported, as it was useful in the land of its birth. This imprudent transplantation is a means of renouncing our individuality; that is to say, that stability of habits, affections,—shall I say prejudices?—which have sprung from the soil, and constitute the moral life of a nation.*

Leaving on one side moral influence, instruction has for its aim both the general improvement of the intellectual being, and the acquirement of the knowledge and aptitude relative to a certain condition.

One of the precepts of education is not *to over-educate*, as one of the precepts of politics (another form of education) is not to over-govern. One must repress, moderate, but not stifle. Leave Nature time to declare herself; do not impose silence upon her before she has spoken.

To instruct is something more than *to inform*; it is at the same time internally to arm and to fortify.

* Vinet wrote this at a time when there was a project of founding a federal university in Switzerland.

The morality of a people is not necessarily proportioned to its instruction; there are causes of evil which instruction cannot avert, and which prevent its good effects, or even cause it to bring about bad results.

Study dates from the moment when we begin to teach ourselves.

Ennui attaches to unsteady and desultory work; in the school, as well as everywhere else, it is idleness that feels weary, it is activity that rejoices; nothing weighs so heavy as a duty which we have tried to make light.

It is not without reason that with the ancients the same words signify school and leisure, games and study. Not that study is play, or should ever become so; but compared with the duties and efforts which should fill every earnest life, study is indeed a game, like those of the antique Palæstra, and the school may be called a place of rest.

The simplification of internal existence, such is, both with respect to moral life and happiness, one of the most pressing wants of our time. But do not let it be supposed that this want can be satisfied by the suppression or reduction of the means of intellectual culture. The evil does not so much arise from the excess of culture as from its quality. It is too late to lead us back into the forests, and could we be led back thither, we should no longer find beneath their venerable shade the blessings that, according to poets, are left behind in them. At all risks we have to advance, but let us see that we do so really.

We must, if possible, give to the new generation an education which, while satisfying the wants of the intellect and the epoch, respects individual existence in its natural and intimate character; and, far from obscuring the sacred traditions of the soul, far from effacing the last traces that the Creator's hand has left upon our clay, shall, on the contrary, protect, and if possible deepen, their impress; an education which shall preserve us from substituting for our own native soul, our living and personal being, I know not what conventional soul, I know not what idea of the age, impersonal, abstract, irresponsible; an education which, far from robbing us of ourselves, shall secure us the possession of what we are, and keep us susceptible of those impressions which, addressing themselves to the soul, will not fall into the mind as into barren sand, but to which is linked the hope of our moral regeneration. Let us be wise in order that we may become Christians.

Unless the most esteemed books on the subject of education be a tissue of declamation and hyperbole, we must confess that nothing is less understood than the art of educating children, that nothing goes on more at random, and that in none of the spheres of our activity are there more numerous and universal oversights. . . . And as it is with regard to the most important subject in the world that this happens, we naturally inquire how, in such a state of things, society can still subsist, and the world go on.

Good sense does not suffice; what is wanted is

just to introduce good sense, and to maintain its rights in a sphere where the most sensible seem to desert their good sense. It is not, indeed, rare to see intellectual men and women become perfectly absurd the moment they have to do with practical education; and besides, if the resource proposed sufficed, it would suffice anywhere, which no one allows. Everything gets observed, studied, learnt, and why not education like the rest?

We see *history* professed by women, while *dancing* is taught by men. With all the reservation rendered incumbent by our ignorance of the principles of the latter art, we venture to ask whether it might not be better to invert the exercise of these two functions?

Some persons, starting from the true principle that man, in order to accomplish his destiny, must become a *new creature*, believe themselves exonerated from making any use of the *old*. They expect, or rather, they hurry on, the conversion of the child, which generally means that they inculcate principles; but both before and afterwards they neglect to give him habits; or, which perhaps comes to the same thing, they let him take up habits of which grace, when it supervenes, will have to efface the marks; they let nature grow up without watching or directing it—unless, indeed, by an opposite error they hasten to smother it. They are afraid of all that is native and spontaneous; they tolerate, on the part of the soul, neither impulse nor freedom; they will not permit it to be born before it be born again; they ignore and

voluntarily neglect all internal energies, out of respect, they say, for the energy from without, or from above : and thus, sometimes compressing without pity an unfolding nature, sometimes letting it develop and evolve at its will, they either prepare for the expected grace the resistance of a rash and wilful soul, or the insipid compliance of an automaton. Childhood but too often presents one or other of these aspects. In religious families we find, with painful surprise, either spoilt children, and spoilt with less scruple than elsewhere, in the expectation of their conversion ; or else mortified creatures, without spirit or generosity, that will not be capable of a second nature, never having had a first.

With a sincere desire for instruction, we learn more by ourselves than with others.

What is not understood cannot profit, and what does not profit almost invariably harms.

The principal object is to accustom a child to a view of morality superior, and even opposed, to that which he will find prevalent in the world.

The sublimity of Christian morality, and its necessary dependence on faith in evangelical truths, should become as an instinct in the child's soul, a fact of conscience that time and the world can never more tear away. We must make dogma fortify his moral faith, and this last must fortify his faith in dogma.

All morality does not lie in formulas ; morality in the commencement is as good presupposed as taught ; it is as important to give a child a prejudice in

favour of right as to present him with its rule; there is a good taste in morals as in other things; and without any detriment to theory, which will have its turn, I should like instinct to take the initiative. Truth is not only an idea that must be known, it is an air that must be breathed, a rule that must be followed, a vision which must be occupied with the good and the beautiful. We too much neglect this method, which is that of God himself. God saves us by showing Himself; faith is a looking.

The child, and perhaps the man as well, only *knows* well what is *shown* him, and the image of things is the true medium between their abstract idea and his personal experience.

The Christian family, which is the true family, is like a picture of one of the old masters, where time and neglect have hid the outline and obscured the colours. That black surface is a Poussin, a Raphael: a short time since it was only a board or a shred of canvas; now, thanks to the agency of a pious art, it will be a monument and a treasure. Let Christians read their duty in this short allegory. The fate of the State depends upon the condition of the family; the condition of the family depends perhaps upon them.

The best of men have owed to their mothers, after God, those seeds of piety and spiritualism that the paternal influence has so often dried up.

All mothers are not able to be, because they wish it, well-taught and cultivated. Many of them, too,

want both leisure and ease of mind for long and continuous conversation with their children. But all may, by prayer and the reading of the Bible, give to their thought and judgment the direction they desire to give to the thoughts of their children. Nor let them deceive themselves; if they do not begin by their own education, if their heart have not, on its own account, adopted all the words they address to their children, those words will be but a vain sound.

But, on the other hand, let those good and true-hearted mothers whom other duties prevent from being much with the objects of their dearest solicitude console themselves. Sanctified by prayer, a single word from their lips, a look, a sigh, addressed to their children, will often do more than an eloquent discourse. We must, under God's blessing, depend on natural means; but in the presence or absence of these means we must depend upon God.

The Church contains the school; there cannot, from the very nature of Christianity, and the form under which it has been given to us, be a Church without a school. Wherever true Christianity establishes itself you will see schools spring up; and one may affirm that if religion took possession of the masses, this single fact would insure immense progress to popular instruction.

If we bring up our children well, our children repay us. They do perhaps more for our education than we for theirs. In order to be invariably what

we ought with regard to them, what respect must we feel for them ! in what a careful and circumspect attitude of mind should we live ! and how necessary is it for us to have our eyes habitually fixed above ! What Jesus Christ said with regard to His disciples, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself," should be the motto of the religious father and mother. What we want our children to be, that we must be ourselves ; then all flows on naturally ; discipline gains unction and grace ; influence is joined to authority, which, however, is always to be acknowledged, and to make itself felt. There is in the task of education a certain good nature that the majority of parents can only find in the neglect of duty ; they play with the cards shown, or rather, they do not play ; there is no part to be sustained, and the child no longer distinguishes (which is a pernicious thing) between the father and the man. But merely to keep watch over our own external demeanour is nothing ; we do not thus long impose upon the child, and we corrupt him. It is within that we must watch and labour ; the essential is to *be*, not to *seem* ; confidence then comes of itself, and to obtain it, is almost to obtain all. Let us then carry on our education, at once ours and that of our children ; let us sanctify ourselves for them, and for ourselves. *

Even if carefully applied, which is rare, *education by facts* cannot teach everything ; it does not instruct in a profound and scientific manner ; it flatters self-love, and gives a habit of abrupt decision and super-

ficial views ; it distracts the soul and injures the inner life ; lastly, it does not suffice to the actual state of society, and cannot supply the place of energetic and methodical study. If it be hurtful merely to see the world in books, it is equally so not to have any knowledge of books. It is combined with the latter that the former study is really profitable. Books, separated from attractive business, produce abstraction and pedantry ; mere business without books leaves no room in the mind except for practical views and ideas of position. It is by being exclusive that all systems become bad.

The history of sciences almost forces upon us the conclusion that, if they had been cultivated with interested views, and primarily as instruments of material well-being, that very well-being would rather have lost than gained ; while by obeying a curiosity free from selfishness, and following no other banner than that of speculation, scientific men have prepared immense results for society, have caused civilisation to take giant strides, have renewed the face of the earth.

From the excellent we may, indeed, descend to the useful, but we do not rise from the useful to the excellent ; the sentiment of duty leads to the acknowledgment of a right, the sentiment of a right does not create the notion of duty ; and lastly, to revert to our subject, speculation tends towards practice practice does not rise to speculation.

Let there be imagined—we ask nothing further,—let there be imagined a system of instruction into which no element should be admitted except on the condition of proving its aptitude for some certain and palpable application. This very basis, this condition, alarms; a degraded future for humanity is at once described.

Our old studies laid aside, what remains?—studies which, to say all in one word, *instruct*, and do not *cultivate*; and which, by always superimposing themselves on man, and never incorporating themselves with him, modify his position, without modifying himself.

Nothing will be found more useful in the school than useless studies; by which I mean those at the end of which we see not a position, a distinction, no morsel of bread, but truth. Let them remain, if only to prove that “man does not live by bread only.” Let them accustom the youthful intellect to seek the light for the sake of the light. This habit once contracted by the mind will be retained.

In public education more particularly a great danger lies for the child in a conspicuous inferiority on any subject, and still more in a general inferiority; in such a case it is only religion that can raise us sufficiently high to be above the unhappy feeling of envy.

The greater number of parents seem anxious to spare their children the trouble of living; nay, they

even make a merit and an art of this. Reducing the activity of their sons in their sedentary studies, and in all exercises in which superintendence and direction are sensibly felt; withdrawing them from whatever involves the least personal responsibility; imposing on them truth, in the acquirement of which they should only assist them; obliging them to see, feel, and decide, only by means of the eyes, the sentiment, and the will of others,—they make them automatons capable of a certain number of acquired movements, and believe that they have educated them when they have only drilled them.

A child develops itself by nothing so much as by the lessons of its nurse, and by the processes that are unconsciously carried on while he is learning his mother tongue. Do we sufficiently reflect on the multitude of unconnected reasonings by which he attains to the fluent and correct use of this mother tongue? How many inductions followed up, analogies seized, shades distinguished!—what wondrous unfolding of the intelligence is implied in the acquirement of a faculty that only the dumb and idiotic lack!

We are more than half what our mothers make us: amongst the things that a man may be deficient in, the worst deficiencies are those which his mother alone could have supplied: in general, we owe far more of what is good to our mothers than our fathers; and superior men may have had commonplace fathers, but almost invariably their mothers will be found to have been distinguished women.

It has been observed long ago that the condition of the family determines that of the society. The time is now come for convincing ourselves that the inverse is not less true. The actual direction of political ideas has strongly reacted on the family. The same centrifugal force is exercised over all our relations. The individual, weak in opposition to the crowd, is strong as regards the family. The citizen is lost in the cosmopolite, the member of the family is absorbed in the politician; we can no longer live except at the circumference; we exile ourselves to the remotest frontier of the soul; the central refuge of loving sentiments is deserted; everywhere family ties are relaxed under the action of new ideas. All that, in default of Christianity, may lead to draw these ties closer than they still exist—all that may retain, at a distance from abstraction, and in the circle of individual affections, souls that have a constant tendency to escape into the desert of theory, should be welcomed with gratitude and with love.

Happy they for whom the hearth is an altar!—for there comes an age when the energy of our life and the exaggeration of our hopes scatter us abroad in a thousand directions, and dissipate our soul by dividing it.

Our insufficiency is a principle of dependence, and our dependence a principle of greatness. Is it necessary to say that the *family*, in the human sense of the word, is had at the cost of these apparent limitations?

There comes an age when everything calls and claims us at once, and the youthful soul resembles those inexperienced painters who, not understanding perspective, place all objects in the foreground.

Paternal affection links itself with morality, and it is by family ties that a degree of morality has been preserved in the most corrupt societies.

Public education, which, under the fallacious name of emulation, has placed ambition at the head, or rather in the place, of all motives that may act upon youthful wills,—public education, which undisguisedly substitutes self-love for love, succeeds in making vanity the basis, the moral life of a whole generation, its leading character, its second nature; and, by anticipation, public happiness and the peace of the country are sacrificed to that arid passion around which everything becomes arid, and which scorches up in the childish soul, as quickly as they appear there, the young and tender shoots of benevolence, generosity, and love.

There are two ways of understanding emulation,—as a spur to vanity, or love of the good excited by examples.

Private education may form learned men, but it rarely produces citizens or men of action; and the incapacity that those formed thereby display in the things of daily life, sufficiently proves that this method, which is apparently the most natural, is, in reality, much less so than that of public education.

Private or special education has inconveniences

which are not the less serious for being essentially negative. There will always be something wanting in a man who has not been plunged early and long in that current of fresh water which chills us for a moment, only to warm us thoroughly by reaction.

2. *Books and Writers for Children—Popular Schools*
—*Classical Studies—Mathematics.*

Few people have a vocation for writing for the young, and a great many attempt to do it; perhaps, indeed, in this class of writings, "there are no degrees between the mediocre and the worst."

We must write for youth with philosophy and enthusiasm both; this is what does good.

Who, then—all other things being equal—who should write better on education than a *Christian woman*? Who could be more true, more delicate, less hard, and less systematic?

I have some scruple with regard to the fictions, even the most moral, that are offered to early childhood. Would not history suffice? It is true that history does not permit the choice of facts or the unity of intention that form the privileges of the romance. But then how difficult it is for a romance not to be romantic, and not to sow in the child's life the germs of miscalculations and disappointment! This is a subject for much reflection. I am so far from believing that, in this respect, the intention

justifies everything, that, above all other romances, I exclude the Christian romance.

Good books for children are the best among the *books for men*.

Perhaps there is no more attractive reading for any age than a good *child's book*. Childhood is a paradise that we all pass through with light and rapid steps, and into which we may not re-enter; but we love to look back on it, however far away we may be; we love to give it a farewell glance; we gladly turn an oppressed burning brow towards the fresh air that is breathed there, and associate ourselves with the impressions of that regretted age, so as once more to become, for a brief while, children—that is, the first among the happy, the first of the poets.

But this attraction is not the only one. The books that have well conceived and well represented the life of children are among those which give us most material for thought; they reduce man, the human being, and morality, to their most simple expression, and contain a psychology so much the more profound, perhaps, as it is the more elementary.

Hence, the class of persons, more numerous than may be supposed, who in their maturity enjoy children's books, need not blush for this innocent taste, or pretend that they only read these works in the interest of their children or the children of others. A child's book may be a great or beautiful work, and deserve a place of honour in our libraries.

There is in instruction a critical, a fatal point,

where we must either stop, or beyond which, if we cross it, we must travel far. There is one thing, perhaps, even more pernicious than ignorance,—it is the imprudent *delibation** of science; it is that presumptuous incursion into domains that we may never traverse; that commencement of knowledge which is but a commencement of ignorance.

The objects of instruction have been greatly multiplied in our preparatory schools; language alone is worth all the rest. Teach the children to think their speech, you will have gained much.

Have we a right conception of the popular school? It ought, above all, to be a gymnasium for thought. Not only is well-directed thought the way of truth, but thought is the activity of the noble principle in man: very far from the thinking man being, as Rousseau pretended, “a depraved animal,” it is only by thought that he rises to the dignity of man. The man who thinks ill may be vicious; the man who does not think cannot be virtuous. Intellectual improvement is often the prelude to moral improvement. Nevertheless we do not present the former as the efficient cause, the adequate condition, the generative principle of the latter.

Classical studies are disliked by radicals of all kinds. Some discover in the study of antiquity a fermentation of democratic enthusiasm; others, the radicals of the movement, perceive the subtle

* From the Latin word *delibatio*, and explained by the context.

germ of an aristocracy of culture; and after the fall or the anathema of all other aristocracies, it is the turn of this last to excite hatred and distrust. In point of fact, nothing speaks more in favour of these studies than this double hostility; these reproaches, which it is easy to justify, only prove that the study of antiquity combines two elements, progress and stability, and consequently satisfies the law of equilibrium. I should form an unfavourable opinion of this study if one of these doctrines flowed from it and not the other.

It is very certain that the human being, sculptured, as it were, at once by classical antiquity and by the Bible, takes from them, and always has taken, the most perfect form; and that if ever the ideal of humanity, soul and mind, has seen itself realised to the involuntary applause of those even from whom the secret of this great work was hid, it has been under the chisel of this sublime kind of statuary, under the double influence of classic culture and the sacred writings. Happy should we be to return, not to the century, but the modes of discipline, which gave to France a Chancellor de l'Hôpital,—admirable specimen of the kind of good and great men formed in that double school.

The study of languages and literatures develops in the child a faculty that no other could develop—so advantageously, I mean,—the sentiment of beauty. The beautiful is, I allow, equally the object of the art of design; but the incorporeal beauties of poetry

and eloquence are decidedly superior to those that belong to painting and sculpture. It is the intellectually beautiful; the beauty of the idea in all its purity, and disengaged from any material form, which, in literature, becomes the object of the young man's contemplation. The faculty of recognising and feeling it, which is the crown of all liberal education, is not of secondary importance; elegant forms of speech, simple, pure, and living, become the ornament and the recommendation of our own language.

Again, a final advantage of these studies springs from an apparent character of imperfection which strikes us in them. They lack the exactness that is attributed to other knowledge. But in order to convince ourselves that it is for this very reason that these studies are useful, we must inquire what a mind would become absolutely given up, if such a thing were possible, to the influence of the exact sciences. This influence would paralyse all its life. It would only take account of what might be made the object of a rigorous valuation, a precise measurement; but this would be to acknowledge but a small proportion of the elements that make up life, as also to misapprehend what constitutes its force and beauty. Neither love nor admiration can be weighed; the impressions of taste are indefinite; all moral force is imponderable; all that is connected with life is no more appreciable in terms of exact science than life itself, which eludes all measurement. By causing these truths to be overlooked, a too exclusive culture of

science would have for its result to pervert the mind, and perhaps to deprive the soul of all the power dependent upon its elasticity. It is, therefore, well to oppose to the influence of this study that of sciences that do not pretend to the same accuracy. But, further, the study of the first elements of the exact sciences, while it occupies the intelligence, gives too little to do to the reason; the mind mingles too little of its own substance with the truths it discovers; many of its forces are not put at all into requisition, and remain without employment; and we may be certain that an intellect thus cultivated—unless, indeed, nature raise a strong opposition—will always prove a deplorably superficial intellect,—clear, rapid, shrewd, practical, I allow, but incapable of rising above the middle regions of thought.

Mathematics, it is true, starting from precise data in order to arrive at strict results, admitting nothing vague or approximate, everywhere demanding full evidence, never, in short, leaving any saving clause in the chain of their inductions, inflexible to prejudice, to ready-made opinions, and to habitual sentiments, and, consequently, not permitting the intellect any other than self-support, present at once two apparently opposite advantages,—that of stimulating the activity of the mind, augmenting, if I may so say, its spontaneity; and that of placing a bridle upon the sallies of the youthful imagination.

The exclusive application of Pascal to physics and

mathematics during his youth was the safeguard of his individuality. These sciences, I believe, do not exercise it much, but neither do they compromise it; whereas acquirements of another kind—literature, for example—excite, develop, but at the same time endanger individuality, because, bringing the inner man out of his retirement, they place him more in contact with the life of all, and oblige him to receive from all more perhaps than he ought. Mathematics are so little liable to do this that they would perhaps be open to an opposite charge, if it were possible that man could be exclusively mathematical.

In truth, nothing should be excluded, and it were well to keep a place open for whatever is useful; but there are certain fundamental studies which should take precedence of others. . . . At the basis of all our studies should naturally be placed that which teaches us to measure material greatness, and that other which, having for its object the analysis and expression of our thoughts, takes some measure of intellectual greatness.

The more the child advances in the science of extension, and that of language, the better able will he be to measure and to name objects, and thenceforth all studies will be accessible to him.

3. *Education of Women—Their Mission—
Marriage.*

One sex cannot grow unless the other grows too, and the attention paid to man's education will never attain its object unless equal and proportionate care be taken with the education of women. In claiming the full dignity of citizens, we have pledged ourselves to bring up at the same time the being given us by God as our helpmeet. To bring up, *i. e.*, to elevate (*elever*),—our language has here admirably defined the task of education.

The essence of good education has been misapprehended, and its aim missed. The studies that strengthen the mind and ennoble the soul have been too often sacrificed to the expensive acquisition of mere accomplishments that have not even been pursued in the fittest manner. To take one example, music, that art which should be entirely devoted to the service of religion, of patriotism, of the sweet sentiments of nature, has become effeminate and corrupting. We hear innocent and virgin lips sing in public, in society, words which, were they reduced into prose and spoken, would bring a blush to the least modest cheek. The despicable sighs of an enervated spirit, the delirium of a selfish passion which sacrifices the most ennobling feelings and most holy relations to the object of its pursuit, the puerile tricks of a scoffing coquetry or an affected delicacy,—

such is the substance of the songs that the wives and daughters of a free and religious people repeat at the feet of our Alps. These are fine arts, we are told; and people do not perceive that this improper application of them insensibly introduces into the heart a poison that infects and corrodes; that in becoming familiar with words we become familiar with things; and that the frivolity which is the very soul of these love-songs grows gradually to be the soul of those who sing them. We repudiate for our wives and daughters songs made for capitals undermined by the civilisation of vice.

Excitable, enthusiastic, and too constantly under the dominion of feeling, woman is easily carried away. She is at the mercy of her emotions, and examines often the gravest questions only in their relations to the heart; she may with the purest intentions fall into the most serious errors. With such tendencies nothing is more dangerous than a superficial education, which does nothing but add exaggeration and irritability to feeling. Better in this respect a complete absence of culture; but far better still a solid and earnest course of instruction, which, by fortifying the influence of reason, opposes an insurmountable barrier to the wanderings of imagination. Then it will no longer be easy to lead women, by the help of imperfectly understood terms, to adopt opinions that they hold all the more fervently the less they are exactly aware of their bearing. Then romances will no longer appear to them the most interesting of all

reading, and in exchange for such dreams, reality, better appreciated, will present them with charms both more positive and more within reach. Then they will only appraise according to its intrinsic value their position in the world, be it what it may ; and will no longer give to the caprice of fashion and the tyranny of conventionality the right of disposing of their happiness.

We shall always be justified in calling defective any plan of study which for years keeps a young girl in ignorance of what woman, even were she a princess, should have some knowledge.

Young girls may be taught by men ; and, indeed, if superior instruction be wanted, this is in all respects the more rational plan ; but all this teaching ought to be surrounded, permeated, and in certain points dominated, by maternal influence.

Celebrity is, perhaps, of all coveted advantages, the one which has least relation to happiness. It has none, more especially, to the true interests of a woman : we should say that the admiration she excites keeps off affection ; that she becomes something less than a human being in becoming more than a woman ; and that she must needs have a double share of the hatred which great renown almost always arouses. Celebrity isolates an authoress, and exiles her, as it were, in her own glory.

A woman who has talent must choose between fame and happiness—between the free employment of her talent and the home sweetnesses of the life

of wife and mother. This must be; nature will have it so. Nature, too, has its own way of laying down laws against accumulation, and rigidly enforces them.

Decidedly the dictionary of women is more restricted than that of men. There are certain words very good for us which are not at the disposal of our fair companions, a language that suits them as little as a man's hat or boots. Science and politics have their dialect, or their slang, which have already too much spoilt men's style, without our letting them spoil that of our women. It is their part to correct us in this particular, if indeed we be not incorrigible.

Woman is more powerful by influence than direct action, by example than argument, and often by silence rather than by speech. Confined within these limits, she is still the depositor and arbitrator of the greatest interests of human life. Peace is the most sublime thing in the world, and of all words the most eloquent. Peace may be compared to that silent action of electricity which melts and fuses the hardest metals. Peace, on the brow and in the glance of a woman, has an inconceivable power.

Arbitrators of our happiness and of a portion of our virtues, women stamp the seal of their character and manners on each new generation, since each generation during its earliest years belongs entirely to them. Whoever has reflected upon the energy and obstinate duration of our first impressions, who-

ever will remember that these first impressions are just those that a mother communicates or modifies, will not hesitate to allow that woman holds in her delicate hands, together with the character of the rising generation, the destinies of society.

Authorship, and even moral authorship, is not, in the majority of cases, easily reconcilable with the nature and duties of a woman; but I will add that, in mature years, or with a talent at once very special and eminent, combined with a quite exceptional position, the application of our principle is limited; and the question changes considerably when it relates, not only to a literary work, but also to work on a greater scale, where talent becomes the instrument of charity, and where the good we seek to do under this form demands a feminine hand.

Laws which impose obedience on the wife, cannot impose love on the husband. But if in this respect the man be not bound by law, he is so much the more stringently bound by religion and the example of Christ. According to this double rule, his love should be a true devotedness.

The independence that becomes a man would be the greatest of misfortunes for a woman; and this has been proved a thousand times by experience. A woman is only in her proper place, only happy, when she has sacrificed this dangerous independence.

What the world calls love and mutual inclination is very far from being able to secure the true happi-

ness of a married pair; not so with what the Gospel calls love. Love founded in God, love such as the Spirit of Christ creates in human hearts, renders devotedness easy to the husband, submission easy to the wife. Whenever we advance in the path of marriage and of life, with eyes lifted up towards a Saviour we love, with a salvation we hope for, with a spirit of prayer and supplication through which Jesus Christ constantly intervenes by His Spirit between the husband and wife, there indeed a marriage may be happy, nay, must infallibly be so. The union between two converted hearts is necessarily sweet and unalterable; without this there is no security.

Marriage necessarily makes the happiness or unhappiness of life; and, what is still more important, it casts a great weight into the awful scale in which are weighed the for and against of our eternal destiny.

Marriage, we allow, places a woman nearest possible to the true destiny of her sex, and, generally speaking, in the most favourable conditions for fulfilling it; but we cannot allow that an unmarried woman does not fulfil it.

After all, women are men (*homines*). Their relation with God is an immediate one. They stand in exactly the same position with regard to Him as men; and in this supreme point of view the equality of the sexes is perfect, as is that between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak. It is in this sense that it has been affirmed that in the new covenant there is no more "male nor female," just as there

is no more "Greek nor barbarian, bond nor free." The two sexes are only two forms or two functions of our common humanity, the members of which are all called to serve and glorify God, some as men, others as women. The service of God is the substance, the rest is only the mode or the accident. Now we fully believe that God has made the woman for the man in that He has dualised man, for whom it was not good to be alone, and who would have been alone in a moral sense, and in that sense more especially, with a being exactly similar and perfectly equal to himself; but we cannot, we must not, imagine that the whole feminine sex has been called out of nothingness into being merely to complete the existence of individuals of the other sex. The proposition, "the woman was made for the man," has, therefore, for counterpoise and complement, another proposition,—the woman has been created for herself; or, better still, man and woman both have been created for God.

Christianity has nowhere more fully displayed the Divine good sense and practical justice that characterise it than on the subject of marriage. When men want to reorganise marriage, and by it society, it is to Christianity that they must revert. Order, with the happiness which is its touchstone, exists only there.

In the Gospel point of view, there can no more be slavery within the married state than outside of it. The dependence of the wife, though without any

other close than the life of either of the parties, is not more degrading than the temporary dependence of a son. Woman is called upon to serve God in a subordinate position, as man himself in a position of command. Submission, authority, are two forms of the same service, and two social functions. We may, if we will, designate them by other names: on the side of man there is power; on that of the woman, influence. If, taking this view of the case, the woman be discontented with her share, I venture to say she does not understand the matter. The most commonplace soul may love power; but a lofty spirit, conscious of its own force, will prefer influence, which is the power of the soul.

Conjugal intimacy would become formidable to the public, or would, at all events, throw perplexity and mistrust into social relations, if all the secrets of which one of the parties has been made the depositary were to become the booty of the other. I can take no pleasure in representing to myself two married people, daily bringing home their spoils, and each doubling the other's share. There are a thousand things that ought to be kept back, or that had better be so. Above all, marriage is never to become a licence for backbiting; and every husband who views himself as what he ought, in fact, to be, the educator of his wife, will beware of troubling by petty topics, the very number of which is an evil, the "ornament of a quiet spirit," which should be the motto of the Christian wife. It is not only to the child, but to

the woman, and in the same sense, that a deep respect is due,—*magna reverentia*.

Proportion between intellects is not equal in value, and cannot replace, the relation between characters ; and two married people, who have many thoughts to exchange, may be less closely allied than the learned husband with the unlettered wife, or even the cultivated woman with the uneducated man, when a common faith and hope have made one soul out of their two. Yet who is there who would venture absolutely to deny the danger of a *mésalliance* in an intellectual respect ?

A woman must, no doubt, love her country, and teach her children to love it ; but like that orb of gentle and comforting radiance which follows our globe through its celestial pilgrimage, woman, noble and loving satellite of man, follows through life in the orbit to which her husband draws her. It is better that a woman should be of no party, but who could be offended if she were of her husband's ? To be of her husband's party is to be of none.

In order that man may reach his full value, woman must reach hers. Vain were it to attempt to constitute an independent existence for either sex ; this is the hypothesis of barbarism and paganism. It is not said that God created the man and the woman, but that " male and female created He them." *Sex* is the separation of two human elements, of two forms of humanity, moral even more than physical, which must needs be separate, the better to unite. *Generic*

man is male and female, for the very reason that the *individual* human being is of only one sex. And in my humble opinion, the physical difference has been determined by the moral, and not the latter by the former. Each sex has been organised according to the idea it was to represent, according to the moral functions it was destined to fulfil. Therefore there is an organic unity between the two. This may be more or less overlooked in an enslaved society; it cannot be so with impunity in a free society, in a democracy.

The bringing together of unequal cultures has greater disadvantages for women than for men. The mutual relations of the latter among themselves—more particularly in public affairs—remain comparatively superficial; it is otherwise with the relations between women, and consequently between families. But when refinement of manners has come in with refinement of mind, when souls have met in the higher regions of the intellect, certain repugnances may diminish, and certain barriers may be a little further removed.



LITERATURE.



FIRST SECTION.

LITERATURE IN GENERAL.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

I.—CHARACTERISTICS.

1. *Definition and Mission of Literature.*

THERE are pure mathematics, can there be pure literature? In such a case we should have to exclude from the appreciation of literary works whatever did not fall under the jurisdiction of taste: and this would not suffice; we should still have to attribute to taste only the discernment of æsthetic truth, or rather absolutely to separate æsthetic from moral truth. Now such a separation is impossible. It is better to acknowledge that literature embraces all those writings in which man synthetically reveals himself to man.

That to which men have agreed to give the special name of *literature* is, however, a thing that comes into contact with everything else. Other *disciplines* have a more definite arena. The domain of literature, distinct from science and pure erudition, embraces an

aggregate of productions which forms, if we may so say, the outermost stratum of the treasures of thought and knowledge ; writings which border on all others, or which derive and deliver up their elaborated and generalised results to a wider public than the special one of the man of science or erudition. Impinging at its extremities on philosophy, science, and erudition, literature displays in the interval its somewhat indefinite domain, just as a valley stretches out between and slopes up the different hills without one's being able exactly to say where it ends. Besides its necessary relation with knowledge, literature has equally direct and more important ones with life, of which it is the echo, and the ideas of which it represents or denounces. It is pre-eminently "the expression of society," that is to say, of government, religion, morals, and events, all at once ; an expression particularly precious when involuntary. It always expresses the *ideas* and impressions of society. The poetry of a given age teaches us less what it has, than what it wants and what it loves. It is a living medal, where the concavities in the die are transformed into convexities on the bronze or the gold. Let us say, in conclusion, that whatever the various elements literature appropriates, it stamps them with its own peculiar seal ; the good and useful put on beneath its touch the form of the beautiful ; and the productions of which it is composed, under the jurisdiction of reason like the rest, are also amenable to the judgment of taste.

2. *Literature and Society.*

Literature—that is, the beautiful realised by language—spontaneously seizes on whatever society adopts, and moreover seizes only this; what is special and must remain special cannot be converted into literature. Art retires unless it cannot be beheld by all; art does not correspond with any particular class in society, but with society as a whole; it refuses to aim at anything less wide than humanity itself.

Science is a solitude which removes us from under the influence of society. The *littérateur*, on the contrary, is only all that he should be on condition of being thoroughly impregnated with the social movement.

3. *Literature and Various Sciences.*

Literature is not so much a science apart as it is the common bond, the mutual interpreter of all sciences; it reduces all ideas to the unity of its own form; they are all passed through its filter, which lets through only what they have of most general and most simply human. Literally speaking, we should say that *it humanises* science, or adapts to the whole of humanity what before was suited only to a certain portion of it, to this or that group separated from the rest, and restricted to itself by the fact of some particular taste, some dominant faculty, or peculiar study. Literature extracts out of every spe-

ciality (the possession only of a few) whatever may prove within the reach and for the advantage of all. I need not say that this word *all* is only to be taken in a restricted and relative sense. I should rather need to point out that this sense or this application is less restricted than many persons suppose.

Literature then, indefatigable messenger, passes from humanity to those groups I have mentioned, and back from those groups to humanity; it asks from science general ideas, with which to increase that common fund that humanity keeps up and constantly adds to; and then it returns to science with human ideas, by which science profits in its turn. It takes back to the depository of the useful and the true that truth and utility transformed into the beautiful,—the beautiful, which is its form, its object, the purest emanation of thought, and perhaps the true in all its truth, in all its light, and with all its reflections. For human thought is not satisfied with less; and in its eyes the beautiful is, if not the climax, at least the necessary complement of the good and the true.

What is commonly called *literature* is really related, like all other kinds of writings, to a special branch of knowledge—that of human life. By this we do not exactly mean that literature teaches us to live, but that it displays for us the spectacle of life. Such is more particularly the object, or, at least, the result of certain literary productions, of which man is the subject, whether they deal with man in general, or with some individual who has figured on this world's stage.

Poetry of every kind reveals to us a world within the world, by raising us from facts to their ideal, of which facts, such as they present themselves to the human eye, are only a very imperfect expression. Finally, in the very style, in the human word, when it has received its full force from talent, the man involuntarily reflects himself; and the first subject of every writer, and sometimes his most interesting, is himself. The analysis of expression is a study of the man; rhetoric is psychology. This is the serious side of literature, in which so many readers only look for amusement or enjoyment.

As a whole, literature can neither be eccentric in its course, nor can it anticipate the future; it is subject to its era, even when reacting upon it. It pays back what it has borrowed; but it belongs to its nature to pay back less than it has received.

Literature, then, will never fail so long as thought, by which it lives, and society, for which it lives, do not fail. Literature is the ideal result of civilisation, the internal state of which is revealed by its emanations, as a perfume betrays the presence and nature of an odoriferous object. It will always be the asylum, the locality, the meeting-place of all those thoughts that are very broadly human, free from too special applications, too technical details, and, if we must speak out, too immediate utilities. It will always occupy a niche in the intellect, a place in the interest of civilised societies. It will always complete, and more, it will begin the culture of man, in whom it will cause

to bud forth, previously to all other, the purely human element.

A society without letters (paradoxical as this may seem) would be a society without information, morals, sociability, and even without religion; not, indeed, that literature creates any of these, but it accompanies them, and is so completely their condition that without it they are not even conceivable.

I do not know how far it would be possible to be scientific yet unlettered. At all events, we shall not find that any man occupying the first rank in science has been absolutely in this condition; while, on the other hand, we often find scientific celebrities adorned by great literary superiority.

By its very nature literature is better adapted than science to spread and flow in society; it is not, like science, contained within certain inviolable limits; algebra does not mingle with "the air we breathe;" letters are more expansive and more volatile; they blend with everything, everything is more or less impregnated with them. There is in society a sort of permanent literary instruction,—irregular, indeed, without form, and even without name, but real for all that, and gone through more or less by every one of a certain social elevation. No man who has not received or accepted it can pass for being *cultivated*; this word corresponds with that of *literature*; and, in fact, science teaches, instructs, but it is only the reflex and curious application of human speech, only literature, that *cultivates*.

It is especially in literature that each has need of all.

A quite literary age cannot be anti-philosophical. There is a natural contiguity between philosophy and literature; we cannot exclusively cultivate one of these domains and entirely neglect the other. A great literary epoch will always be a thoughtful one; the thought may not, indeed, always assume a philosophic form, but it will always possess a philosophic substance. Poets themselves may be philosophers.

Whatever be the importance and dignity of the sciences, their results are, no more than the triumphs of the fine arts, a measure of the power of the human mind, nor the whole principle of its life. Sciences that occupy themselves with things are less profoundly human than literature, which has man for its subject and man for its end.

The testimony of history is not so ingenuous as that of literature.

II.—LITERARY EMOTION.

1. *Its Nature.*

I would not have men fall into this heresy, which is the ruin of every art, this error of measuring the merit of any literary production by the virtue of the sensations it excites. The peculiarity of true literary emotion is to give room and scope for thought; to be even aided by the conflict of thought. Literary enjoyment is human, I repeat; it interests, it moves the

whole man, leaves no part of his nature passive and unoccupied: but it is eminently intellectual; and above all its impressions causes Thought to brood, serene and dominant, sustained and surrounded by all her powers.

There are certain things that do not belong, that never have belonged, to literature. In the same way, and for the same reason, that it repudiates all that too deeply involves life, troubles it, and takes the sceptre out of the hands of thought, it rejects, and rejects with disdain, whatever has for aim and effect to carry disorder into the senses. Where thought is nothing more than the slave of matter and the coarse procuress of sin, there is nothing literary; and we may boldly strike out from the number of literary works those which do not, at least, idealise subjects of this kind, and assign in some way or other a share in them to thought. For the rest, even were they literary, all those works that breathe voluptuousness, which lull to sleep the watchfulness of the mind over the body, which address themselves to the sensual part of our nature, the young man should chase from his presence: form, art, beauty, all these are but vain pretexts; you know very well whether it be a literary impression or some other that you are seeking. Propose this question to yourself, answer it honestly, and abide by the answer; you will be safe, and your culture will lose nothing.

Morality recognises another chastity than that

which exclusively claims the name. Out of respect for human dignity it rejects sanguinary images and atrocious scenes; it is willing, no doubt, that man should support the sight of the pains of others on the same title that he supports his own; nay, it even enjoins that he should go to meet the most heart-rending spectacles at the calls of mercy; but whatever represents, without any necessity and in too cruel and actual a manner, human degradation, whatever makes of that degradation a spectacle and an aliment for the senses, is interdicted by morality alike to pen and pencil. Even did she not see in it a danger for the soul, she would at least see a useless suffering for the heart; for such details add no force to our convictions, no elements to our moral life. What would be the state of a soul to which such sensations were necessary? It would have reached a point where moral teaching loses all applicability, a degree of degradation to which moral teaching does not descend, unless, indeed, it be through the nerves that conviction makes its way, and conversion effects itself. And, in fact, all these physics of crime only produce a physical impression. They do not reach the serene regions of thought, the summit of our moral being; they do nothing but spread trouble and disorder at the foot of the mountain.

The true power of talent does not show itself in stirring the senses: who does not know how easy this is? who could not accomplish at least so small a thing as this? Power is displayed by the voluntary

relinquishment of such easy methods. Talent is proved by reaching the soul ; and by means of well-chosen, sensible images, causing the *idea* of the poetic object to arrive thither full and strong indeed, but as pure in form as definite in outline.

2. *Function of Thought.*

In the first effervescence of the soul and the passions, thinking is only the weakest half of life ; and even in thought it is life that we seek, that is to say, animation,—a keen emotion, even though it be a painful one. This already exceeds the scope of literature, which has not, and may not accept, such emotions. And although you owe them to literary productions, I do not, for all that, hold them to be literary emotions. . There are two things in the literature of any time—the literature first of all, but the times as well ; the times above all, that is to say, everything that is dear to us. People feel, suffer, hope, around you ; you yourselves love, feel, suffer, and hope : a life this too real, too absorbing by itself, to belong to literature. Literary emotions are of another kind,—human, no doubt, how should they not be so, since literature is humanity ;—human, but not contemporaneous, present, individual ; that within us which receives the literary impressions being less the individual than the man, it is in the more universal portions of our being that we are affected, and an emotion that troubles the soul, throws uncertainty

and disorder into it, reacts too immediately upon life, is not a purely literary emotion.

Music, that art whose power is so immediately and instantaneously felt, whose action is so sensible,—music, upon whose effects conventional ideas seem to have no influence,—even music comes down from one age to another, appearing colourless, impotent, disarmed of all its fascinations; and there are only a few who can discover under these superannuated forms the primitive and immortal tones of nature. The great works of the art of writing are less liable to become obliterated; nothing of them dies but what ought to die, the actual, the transitory; the human remains, and through it they touch us. But it is very remarkable—and to this I wanted to come—that the human, separated from the forms that our own era assigns to it, reacts less imperiously upon our personality; exercises so much the more our contemplative faculties, and so much the less our sensitive being; touches us, so to speak, only by the highest portions of our nature.

3. *Emotion, and Ancient and Contemporaneous Literature.*

What especially renders a passion communicable and contagious is its form, its costume, its language, the allusions and images that it assumes. If all these be taken from the actual, from what surrounds us, it is no longer an image of a passion, but a real passion,

a fact that we see too closely to see with impunity ; whereas, if these actual forms be wanting, if the language be different, if the allusions are borrowed from another order of facts—in a word, if the costume of the passion be antique or foreign, nothing remains to this passion but its most general, most abstract character, and in this state it has much less power over us ; it may be a true, and consequently an interesting image, but it is an image.

I think this idea a very true one, and I want no other proof of it than the passionate preference the young have always given to the modern in literature, and their contempt, or at least their insensibility—so slow to cure—for the productions of a former age. We cannot hide it from ourselves, the most beautiful things, if they are old, excite less passion than less beautiful things that are new ; they may, indeed, excite enthusiasm, but enthusiasm is not passion ; it rather preserves from it. In fifty years' time, in two centuries, Werther will still be read and admired as now,—more than now, it may be ; but it will no longer occasion suicides.

III.—OF VARIOUS LITERATURES.

1. *Ancient Literature.*

Classical antiquity will for a long time to come be the basis of all literary instruction, and as yet we see nothing likely to replace it. Amongst its titles to

our assiduous study it has two opposite ones,—its distance and its proximity. It pleads the second of these titles against all literature, which, being still more ancient, might boast moreover of a great intrinsic value. But strong through its proximity against all rival claims, further removed or more ancient, it is nearly in opposition to a Christian literature. The line of demarcation that Christianity has drawn between the ancient and the modern world is deep as an abyss. A different ideal of man and of life has risen out of the bosom of the truth,—an ideal which, while higher than any other, is equally natural; an ideal that every mind adopts without effort, even when the source that furnishes him with it is unfortunately suspected or disliked; an ideal less simple, indeed, than that of antiquity, but only because it is more complete; an ideal which may seem less pure, as our cathedrals are less pure than the Parthenon, but which will be more so when it shall express the whole truth—better, perhaps, than our cathedrals express the whole religion of Jesus Christ; an ideal, in short, outside of which we can no longer conceive or represent man, although we may still take pleasure in finding in antiquity, free from all complication and all conflict, certain sentiments, certain human tendencies, which, under the light of Christianity, can no more unfold themselves without control or contradiction.

Christian literature (and I beg that this expression may not be taken in its religious sense),—Christian

literature is no more exclusively Gothic than our old charities are exclusively Christian. I maintain that a good portion of it is Greek in principle, as in fact; the Greek element is not outside of Christianity, which has not merely received it, but, if I mistake not, reproduced and consecrated it. And why should we wonder at this? The Greek element is the human,—in its poverty, if you will, but also in its simplicity. Now this element, taken in its healthy and normal aspect, is in the highest degree harmonious with Christianity. Hence, then, when this element, mingled with others, has found its place in an admirable fusion, the definitive unity of which hardly allows us to distinguish the elements that compose it; when something of the contemplation of the anchorites, and the keen recollections of the social man, of the habits of private life and the one ever-present thought of society—of the sadness of the Middle Ages without their gall, and of the antique severity without its coldness—of the restoration of individuality, and of the might of common convictions—then, when all these diverse hues shall form one clear, general tint, on which shall shine all the brilliancy of the Greek intellect, then you will have found, not, indeed, a perfect realisation (it is out of reach), but the approximate ideas and the distinct signs of Christian literature. It is then that you will encounter Bossuet and Racine; and it is towards that precise point, or towards that rigidly limited space, that I bid you turn and fix your glance. That is *our* antiquity.

It is not but that there are many contrasts, even literary ones, between Christianity and antiquity; but, in general, literary truth ought to mould itself on moral truth. The inverse is, I own, less natural.

Antiquity and Christianity are the two primitive ages of humanity. Antiquity is man in the plenitude and simplicity of his human development; Christianity is the simplicity and plenitude of human nature raised to the Divine. There are relations between these terms, although no doubt an abyss divides them; antiquity accomplishes in an æsthetic sense a development, of which the entirely moral basis is widened and corrected by Christianity. Human developments can only be complete by both these means,—culture of the soul by Christianity, culture of the mind and taste by the study of antiquity.

There is, in paganism, a constant proportion between the sign and the thing signified, between the idea and the symbol. The comparison of the pagan idea with the pagan symbol never awakens in the mind a sense of the insufficiency and vanity of the latter. The metaphysics and morality of paganism are such that the symbols reach their level only too easily. Even the sublime in this religion is only *breast high*; it is in some sort relative; in ours it is absolute. In the common acceptation of the word there is nothing of the marvellous in our religion, although it be marvellous; we cannot at least invent miracles in imitation of its own, which are historical. Its miracles are not ornaments, but an integral part of

itself, its means, or force. The images employed in the prophecies and the Apocalypse have neither a literary intention nor character; they are sublime rather than poetical; may we not say that their voluntary grotesqueness seems intended to exclude them from the domain of poetry, and thus to preserve them from all profanation?

There is a great difference in an æsthetic point of view, at all events, and probably in many others, between paganism anterior and subsequent to Christianity; the latter is far from being equal in worth to the former; the latter is not only false, but contradictory; the former may have cultivated the human element in default of and to the prejudice of the Divine; the second cultivates neither and corrupts both. This is why classical literature retains its value, even for Christian minds; error for error, we prefer that which has not come across the truth; and the beautiful, impossible in that complicated error which is the negation of the truth, is not incompatible with simple error, which is but the absence of it.

2. *Christian Literature.*

We must confess that an earnest Christianity restricts literary genius in certain directions.

All literature is profane. Christianity has no literature of its own; it must wait till it has a world of its own. It is perhaps from it that the greatest works of genius in modern times have sprung, because the

greatest thoughts that can excite and nourish genius are its own; but no literature depends upon it, because literature is dependent upon society alone, which, in the true sense of the word, is not as yet Christian. All literature, taken as a whole and piously judged—all literature, that even of the nineteenth century, is outside of the truth; and if you choose to submit it to the most formidable of ordeals, it will almost all melt away in your hands. Be, then, Christian yourselves, since literature is not, that is all I can say to you; and be sure that it can be instructive, luminous, and fertile, for no one so much as for the Christian. Perhaps one must be a Christian rightly to read Molière and La Fontaine, and thoroughly to understand them—that is to say, better than they understood themselves. In any case, you cannot have a literature made on purpose for your convictions, and if it were so made it would not be literature. Nothing of this kind is good, nor even true, unless it be spontaneous. We study man in man, and literature, which also is man, is to be studied in literature.

It is thus that the “Faust” of Goethe is a Christian work, and the “Misanthrope” of Molière a sermon on James iii. 17.

The truth that the Christian deduces from the “Misanthrope” is that it only belongs to lofty virtue to be indulgent; or, to speak the language of St. James, that it only belongs to the “wisdom which is first peace,” to be, in the next place, “peaceable and easily entreated.”

To render literature Christian, and to make Christianity literary, are two very different enterprises, the second of which has never been successfully carried out, unless the first has been aimed at. A third attempt is that of making known Christianity or the Christian life by literary means; and this will never be succeeded in (I do not say to the satisfaction of Christians, but to that of the world and of good sense) except by being or becoming one's self Christian.

The beauty of Christian dogma is entirely internal, entirely moral; it is untranslatable; it is a text which can only be read in the original: mysticism is the only mythology of which our religion is susceptible.

If there be a literature at once serious and serene, animated and calm, it is that in the midst of which Milton's masterpiece shines out. This poem, founded on the Christian idea of joy springing up for man only out of tears, presents us happiness under the above possible conditions; and if it defies us to obtain any others, if it connects itself with, and leads us ever back to, terrible recollections, these recollections enhance Christian joy while rendering it graver; and, moreover, these recollections are facts, realities, which will not efface themselves before our illusions, facts of which the trace subsists in life and the conscience, of which the consequences are constantly met with, and will oppress men of the world by their weight, until the hand which has lifted the awful burden of

so many souls shall be laid on them too, to deliver them from it.

If we do not purpose to compare popular literature to a thermometer, which does not occasion the temperature, but only records it, we may confidently compare it to those electric conductors which do not, indeed, contain within themselves, but draw out of reservoirs and faithfully communicate, a mysterious and potent fluid. "L'Esprit des Lois" was never a popular book, but many of its doctrines have become so.

3. *Classical and Romantic.*

Romanticism is a pure illusion regarding human life; it is the avoidance of the real and the possible; the dream of a world which does not and cannot exist; a species of convention in which certain minds and certain epochs live. Poetry, on the contrary, is the most lively comprehension of things, their most intimate as well as their highest truth.

Romantic, according to my idea, is not synonymous with interesting; and I am quite willing that a romance should, while instructing, interest me; all the more willing that I quite understand that it would be less instructive if less interesting. This seems to me to open out a fair field for the writers of romance, nor can they reasonably complain of us. Unfortunately, *mundus vult decipi*: what the generality of readers ask of a romance-writer is just what we would have withheld from them; they want to be rocked

into oblivion of life, and foolishly prefer, to the author that would teach them to love it, the one who renders it distasteful; to him who places poetry in reality, him who places, or at all events seeks, it anywhere else; I say him who seeks it, since a poetry that cannot be linked with reality is not true poetry. The love of the romantic has not, it may be, created the romance, but assuredly it has dictated its laws; it is the romantic that almost every one looks for there, even those who pique themselves most upon seeking something else.

Romanticism, for us moderns, is the right of only remounting to our own origin, of depending upon our labours, or rather being ourselves in literature and in art. Romanticism is the natural and peculiar literature of Latin nations, of races which, under the auspices of Christianity, passed from the hands of the Romans into those of the Germanic races, and whose individuality has been consolidated by these very revolutions. Romanticism is therefore, in other words, the collective individuality of societies that have sprung from Christianity and the invasion of the northerners. It is the antithesis, not of antiquity, but of the servile imitation of antiquity, of classicism. Let us be of our own time, of our own country; such is its motto and its formula.

People contented themselves with this word romanticism, and did not see that what was so called was no more a literature than eclecticism is a philosophy, than Protestantism is a religion. Under this

far too precise name, nothing was found in reality but a vague idea of emancipation; in default of a prepared soil men fell back, at least for a time, under the yoke of models, and, correctly speaking, they had done nothing but change their servitude. Some elements, however, allow themselves to be discerned in the whirl of new ideas; one after the other these settle down and take root in men's minds, commencing there the religion of the new literature; but this was not as yet to constitute it, nor is it constituted even now.

Modern ideas, all more or less related to Christianity, have created an exquisite happiness and exquisite sufferings of which the ancients had no idea. Even at the present time all the world will not understand such sufferings; to many people they rather seem pitiable than inspire pity; and really we must not be too much surprised at this, so many imaginary misfortunes have cheated us out of our compassion. We have seen, not only in books, but in life, so many griefs with an excellent appetite, so many rosy-cheeked despairs, so many gloomy beaux and afflicted belles, whom a good and substantial misfortune, even of the most commonplace character, would have infallibly and radically consoled, we are so thoroughly convinced that these intimate distresses are but the myriad caprices, the myriad contortions, of an egotistical vanity, that we have become—I feel it myself—somewhat unjust and severe towards the wants and the sufferings of a

susceptible nature. This is at once an unfortunate consequence and a bad symptom; for the intimate happiness of the soul, moral felicity, foretaste of heavenly beatitude, is scarcely less mysterious than moral unhappiness, and is connected with the same principle. How then conceive the one if we cannot conceive the other? And if both are alike unintelligible, what feeling, what capacity have we for that higher life, whose pure ideas are numbered amongst the elements of happiness?

Our actual literature, as a whole, is nothing but tumult in the void, taking all its ideas outside of society, because society has none; hardly describing the world in any other way, and having neither contact nor intercourse with it except through the passions which never fail in society, even although there be a deficiency of thought.

In literature I belong at once to the present *régime* and to the old; I applaud the daring of the former, I admire and regret the purity of the latter.

Exaggeration is the amusement of idle societies, the romantic is their only poetry. Now action alone gives the true measure of things; it is on foot, not by the eye, that we can most certainly estimate distance. The pure idea does not suffice to the soul, which need facts, evidence, types; in default of which the mind, given up to certain strong instincts, transforms the world of moral ideas into a mythology, in which, without much difficulty, demons usurp the place of deities.

After having sought elsewhere, as all the world does, for shocks and dazzling sensations, I have returned step by step, and with delight, into that land of limpid light (the classics), and to the centre of those clear horizons, those bold and pure forms, that movement at once spirited and restrained, that perfection, as a whole, so rare among us moderns, that wondrous blending of the most ingenuous sublimity and the most correct taste, finally, that chaste beauty, and, if we may apply moral epithets to literature, those innocent charms, which have even more and more enraptured my faculties; in a word,—

“In them alone a nameless grace I find,
Which always charms and never tires the mind.”

I am not insensible to other beauties; nay, I am more easily taken by them—*caught with a birdcall*, as Montaigne says—than are many others; and even my unbiassed judgment acknowledges the advantages peculiar to the writings of our own time. There may not, indeed, perhaps be a literature, not a light equally diffused; rather have we sudden flashes and rapid gleams in a veiled and sombre stage; few complete works; few complete men; little of that wise simplicity or simple wisdom that adorns great epochs; ours is a hasty but amazing fertility; seldom the plan of a campaign, but bold surprises and assaults; and a profundity dearly bought by the mournfulness of our fears and the anxiety of our hopes. So the tragical in literature has succeeded, in our inventions, a tragical in history

far more severe and heartrending; it is no longer melancholy, it is a hard and heavy gloom, which reappears in all styles, and bitterly tinges our laughter and our jests; the graces themselves—the classic school might say,—the graces themselves have wept. From all this results in the writings of the day a certain *Je ne sais quoi* that attracts and repels; a simplicity hitherto unknown, an unheard-of refinement; a blending a confusion of limits between the extraordinary and the trivial; coarse deceptions, keen and ever-fresh sensations; but it is just from all these rapid and contradictory impressions that the impossibility of cultivating man by means of this literature is evident, and the necessity to go back to the point where the stream flows less impetuously and more clearly.

The good in literature is the true; the false has never been classical; and the true danger is never in knowledge, but in imperfect knowledge.

The particular glory of the writings of an Augustan age are proportion in beauty and measure in force. It is by this admirable moderation that they have become classical.

The great men of that great age had not so much cleverness as we have now-a-days; they were more profound and more rich, though we have a false semblance of excelling them in these respects; but decidedly our age has more *coined intellect*, more of that brilliancy that springs from the general decomposition of society. Has it not been said that certain substances

become luminous by putrefaction? But is this agency of decomposition, which multiplies reflection and appearances, equal in worth to those grand views, those simple thoughts, that were then called *bel esprit*?

CHAPTER II.

LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE.

I.—GRAMMAR.

1. *Grammar and Literature.*

GRAMMAR verges into literature, of which, indeed, it is the most ancient name; we have only to prolong it a little in a straight line to make it become literature.

2. *Language: Necessity of Studying it — Thinkers and Authors—Idiom of a People and its Civilisation—Respect for Language.*

Grammatical instruction, if we reduce it to a more psychological and equally simple exposition, not of the rules, as is always said, but of the *facts* of the mother tongue, forms, with the teaching of religion (for nothing is more harmonious, more nearly related, than these two studies), the true basis of the culture of our and of every people. A society which does not feel its religion, or know its language, is not within the terms of a true civilisation.

In general, language is too little studied; it is

only known wholesale, as it were; its reasons are not fathomed; we do not sufficiently practise ourselves in its management. Those who have the instinct, the quick and intimate sentiment of language, are allowed the exclusive employment of this advantage; we do not try to appropriate all that study, with less of natural talent, may enable us to appropriate. Language remains poor in words, and reduces itself to a small number of articulations, in unpractised hands; it only yields to others all it has to yield.

What greater subject for poetry than the transformation of a world? And what more living witness, more intimate confidant of that transformation, than the birth of an idiom? He who did not feel the poetry of such a subject would be incapable of feeling any poetry. If Adam, giving name to natural objects, manifesting to himself his internal existence, reproducing himself in speech, rising by it to human dignity, is an eminently poetical subject for the soul, must there not also be poetry in the aspect of a nation, a group of nations, stamping on its language, at the moment of some decisive transition, the profound impress of its past, its present, and its future? If an epoch had the consciousness of what it was and what it did, would it not be seen, like "our great forefather," to thrill at the sight of this new-born language, its companion, its Eve, that comes to enchant its waking hour?

Grammar, bringing back to a more precise expression

all these rapid and instinctive reasonings of which I have spoken above, is at once a logical and metaphysical exercise. The mind that devotes itself to it gradually grows in the necessary arts of abstraction and generalisation, two mental operations that constantly recur in this study. Hence it has a good right to be considered as the most fitting preparation for philosophical studies, and I doubt that we could find a single instance of an intellect distinguished in this latter branch, and not conversant with the science of language.

The art of writing, such as sound minds have conceived of it, implies so universal, so varied, so delicate an application of all the faculties of the understanding, that it is hardly possible to imagine a course of gymnastics more profitable to these faculties. It is almost the art of thinking, but it is the art of thinking applied to the expression of our own thoughts, of our own feelings, of all we possess of most near and familiar.

All great thinkers have not been great writers, but where is the great writer who has been in other respects a commonplace man?

Speech is the great lever for good and ill; speech, the product of thought, reacts upon thought, and through it upon life. It is impossible to calculate the social results of a study by means of which, if it be well carried out, we shall no longer speak without knowing what we say.

I am disposed to believe that among the causes

that impede, favour, or determine the civilisation of a people, the nature of the language it speaks is by no means one of the least important. There might be a language which, well learned, would necessarily give an admirable form to the mind. A perfect language would be truth itself.

How much psychology, how much history, how much information, in the narrative of the adventures of a word!

If an imperfect language be unfavourable to the civilisation of the people speaking it, the imperfect use of a language is still more injurious.

Words are the representative signs of intellectual values. Writers without purity or correctness of style are like coiners of false money, who introduce disturbance into intellectual transactions, and diminish the credit of words. Respect for language is almost a morality.

The profanation of words leads to the contempt of things; and in morality, as well as in religion, incredulity is the necessary reaction of hypocrisy.

Thought does much for a language, but passion more. It is only from passion that it can receive movement, plasticity, and, strange to say, measure as well.

Language is a means of expressing our thoughts only because it is, in the first instance, a way of becoming conscious of them. Language methodically analyses, that is, decomposes, distributes, and classifies, that crowd of perceptions which without its aid

would remain heaped up and confused in the mind. Like a powerful chemical agent, it constrains the different elements of which each of our thoughts is composed to pronounce and differentiate themselves in their very union. Like a torch, it throws a bright light into those retreats of the soul into which only a dim twilight had been able to penetrate.

To have learnt a language is to have put one's self in possession of all that mass of fundamental and ordinary ideas of which the groundwork of that language is composed. Hence it results that learning a foreign tongue initiates us into the secret of the individuality of the people who speak it ; so that an excellent method of understanding a nation is to study the idioms of which it makes use.

Nothing is more intimately connected with a man or a people than their speech ; it is not only the instrument, but the substance of their thought, the true image of their life, the whole of their true philosophy. It is at the same time the result of social life and the means of that life ; it is an indispensable condition of order, of union, and consequently of progress ; it is the talisman of our Babel. What wonder, then, if a universal instinct watches with jealous care over a vocabulary and a grammar, the alteration of which would endanger both confusion of tongues and the dispersion, no longer of tribes, but of the forces of society ? To watch our language is to watch our society itself.

Language is sacred as society. It is not immu-

table, it cannot be so; but it will not tolerate any arbitrary and capricious change, any gratuitous violence, any purely individual modification. In the alterations that it accepts it submits to its own law, and obeys only its own wants.

In general, a language receives its greatest improvements from those for whom it is only an instrument,—men of genius, who, treating of interesting subjects and expressing great things, have, without other intention, made for themselves a language adapted to the different requirements of their thought. We must expect nothing profound or potent from a reformation of language in which the language itself has been the sole object and ultimate term. It is thought that elevates speech.

Language, as well as civil society, rests on respect for property: in grammar, as in politics, there are vested rights; each word claims its idea, as each individual his possession. If once these rights are yielded up to the caprice of all or of one, language, like society, crumbles; but, on the other hand, in the forced immobility of property, society and language stagnate. But the progress of language must go on slowly and without violence; the more insensible it is, the more secure; it legalises itself so much the better the less we can trace its origin; as much as possible it must be anonymous. In our days it is very far from remaining within these conditions; as regards it, the rights of property are constantly violated; individual arbitration substitutes itself

for legal ; conventionality, the basis of language, is threatened to be set aside, and consequently confusion to be introduced.

The contempt of language, especially as concerns the meaning of words, is one of the most certain symptoms of the decadence of art, and the poetical impotence of an epoch ; nay, it is even a very serious fact in other respects ; anarchy in language corresponds almost invariably with anarchy in ideas. As a man, and not merely as an author, we should make it a serious duty to respect the articles of that social treaty by which all the men of one country are bound to recognise the same ideas in the same signs.

Language—admirable impress of the man, admitted revealer of all his secrets,—language gives back our impressions more readily than our reflections, and consequently often the appearance rather than the reality of things.

3. *French and German.*

Taken in itself, the French language offers to the observer many merits that well deserve his attention. Less philosophical than the German, it is perhaps more logical ; its rigour and consistency in syntax, its delicacy in form, and rapidity of movement, contrast strikingly with the star under which it was born, and the stormy auspices of its earliest formation. This is perhaps worthy of our attentive examination and a formal study.

II.—STYLE.

1. *Style, Logic, and Language—Translation.*

Such as the thought is, such will the style be.

The more I reflect, the more I am led to believe that logic of a delicate or profound character is the condition and sometimes the first premiss of beauties of style, both in prose and poetry. Order and proportion, how much is included in those two words! the whole logic of style, indeed; but it has its degrees, it has its mysteries, and the initiation that it imposes is laborious and slow; from well to better, better to best, in this department, as in all others, the way is long, and in one sense never-ending.

When the garb of an idea, by dint of transparency and purity, no longer lets anything but the idea appear, precise, animated, attractive; when expressions, instead of arresting the gaze like brilliant asperities, unresistingly allow themselves to be penetrated like a luminous medium; when it is only by reflection that we return to appreciate the details separately, we may feel sure that we have just been reading a very well written work.

When subtlety is dominant, either in the mind or the style, it is less a force than a weakness; it is, if not the source, at least the companion of many defects. At first sight a very subtle mind seems superior; and, in fact, it has a superiority of a certain kind; but yet, in the judgment of lofty natures, and

of the public that these finally influence, how much is subtlety below simplicity! How habitually cold, weak, frivolous, often false, is the intellect in which it prevails! And besides, in itself simplicity has more sense than subtlety. That which is simple and spiritual is much more spiritual than that which is only spiritual and subtle. "It is only great hearts that know how much glory there is in being good," repeats Fénelon after Sophocles. Thus, too, it is only great minds that know how much glory there is in being simple. Posterity, indeed, invariably discerns this glory, but contemporaries may overlook it.

The style of a writer combines with the language he makes use of. This style is his own, but must accommodate itself to the language he is obliged to employ: style both obeys language and commands its services. Hence results an indivisible whole. The style of the author, without his language, is his style no longer; and on this head the more faithfully a translator strives to render the forms of his original, the less will he render its style. Certain phrases, locutions, terms of speech, being no longer sustained by the idiom on which they rested in the original, take a quite different character in translation, or rather lose all character, all truth whatever. One cannot, therefore, absolutely prescribe that the style of an author be identically rendered, except in cases, always very rare, where the two languages offer quite equivalent terms. In the majority of cases we must make use of a delicate tempering, we must modify the

style to suit it to the language, or, if it be possible, the language to suit it to the style; but at all events, the two must sustain and, as it were, accept each other. Perhaps the true method would consist in saying to one's self, If the author I translate, thinking as he did, had had to employ my language, or rather, if my language had been his, how would he have rendered this fact, this idea, this sentiment? I think this is the best way of identifying one's self with the original author, and of *translating* him,—that is, *transporting* him living and entire into a foreign tongue.

In the matter of translation, talent is not all; nor even talent joined to learning, since an epoch necessarily adds to the learning of the preceding one, until all be known, or we despair in good earnest of learning more.

When style becomes a display, when a simple expression bears no longer any force, when stimulants alone provoke signs of animation, are the faculties in a normal state? has life its due fulness? is the soul in *good health*? It may be that the writer who employs these means is very strong; but is the generation to whom he applies them strong also? We doubt it.

Just as the style is the man, as the era is a collective individuality, so a style is an era.

In wasting words we wear out ideas.

It is less common than may be supposed to have the style of one's thought: uncultivated geniuses have sometimes this merit; half-cultivated ones cannot pretend to it; and great writers are great because

they possess it in the highest degree. Disproportion, or unsuitability between form and substance, is the stigma of inferior artists, as it is in politics, civilisation, and morality the mark of inferior epochs, and nations behind the rest. Fulness of life, vigorous maturity, only realises and announces itself by means of this correspondence—in all works, at least, which are not purely instinctive. The great point for the writer is to arrive through art at the sincerity of instinct, or rather for the instinct to pass intact through the sinuous defiles of art and the asperities of labour. This is the triumph of art consummated, the joy of superior talent,—sometimes, but much more rarely, the quite gratuitous happiness of zeal and love. How often, indeed, may not the style of the most sincere man be deficient in sincerity!

2. *Rhythmical Unity.*

Man is one; if he does not pretend to receive all impressions at once, he insists at least on all he does receive agreeing with each other. The rhythmical unity of periods pleases him, as symbol or as metaphor. That grammatical and logical whole called the phrase ought at the same time to be a musical whole: he asks from prose, only under a more obscure and indefinite form, what he expects from poetry; and, indeed, where is the actual boundary between poetry and prose? and how can one help owning that prose is but poetry gradually but never entirely extinguished or

calmed down? It would astonish could we but tell how much a diction denuded of metre loses in persuasive efficacy, and how great a part has been played in the conditions of an eloquent style by the distribution of intervals in the phrase, distribution of sounds, and well-chosen cadences. One may, I know, be substantially eloquent without having the sentiment of oratorical rhythm, but without this rhythm we do not fully realise the eloquence of which we are capable; or rather, as eloquence is a simple effect from many causes, each true author is a writer in numbers, and in one who is not, the people do not sufficiently feel the orator.

3. *Substance and Form.*

Neither the idea without the form, nor the form without the idea, can perpetuate itself.

The most exquisite form—were it possible to give it to a substance that was coarse, vile, and without consistency, and if style were not itself thought,—the most exquisite form could not preserve, not immortalise writings: truth alone is born with a capacity for life; truth alone does not pass away.

It seems to me quite in order, not only that the lover of the true should be at the same time a lover of the beautiful, but that a Christian who writes verses should make that, as well as everything else, a point of conscience, and should write them as well as he possibly can.

The beautiful may result immediately from senti-

ments, from affections; the good is inseparable from the idea of duty! Moral truth is only realised and complete in the man who arrives at the beautiful by means of the good; that is to say, at the sentiment of love by the sentiment of duty. The love which will only live under its own jurisdiction, only obey itself—instinctive love, love which has not passed through the narrow way of conscience, love which outruns duty, does not constitute a moral being in all its integrity, any more than does the duty which is not resolvable into love. We must have the two elements, and in the order I have given.

We do not see why the good should exclude the beautiful; their divorce is only an accident, their union is in the order of things; and when the good arrays itself in the beautiful it does but reclaim what belongs to it.

Form only endures on a solid substance, just as colour only holds on a good material; and among the writers reputed classical there is not one who does not give us food for thought and teach us to think.

Then, when the idea is very substantial and forcible, the importance of the form diminishes, or rather, a forcible and substantial idea finds from the first a form that essentially suits it. It has no difficulty in piercing through the accidents of language; its body is luminous, and shines through the garb bestowed on it.

I allow that truth knows more languages than

one, that it is polyglot, so to say, because it is human. It is therefore to render it service to make it speak more than one dialect : we know a thing imperfectly when we can only express it in one way. But still each idea has its form ; and the alliance of evangelical sentiments with worldly language has something unnatural about it : the peculiarities of a fashionable style ill suit the sublime simplicity of an apostolic thought.

III.—LANGUAGE.

1. *Fixing and Innovating.*

To fix a language is not to arrest its development or limit its acquisitions ; it is to reject utterly what it hesitated to reject, and authoritatively to sanction all the rest.

There are individualities of language which depend upon individuality of genius, which the latter renders legitimate, and which are inseparable from it.

Every great writer is an innovator as regards language ; even those of our classics who appear to us now-a-days to have been the most discreet and circumspect in this particular, were bolder than we imagine ; their audacities, now adopted by the public, have ceased to be audacious.

2. *Classical Language and that of Men of the World.*

Literary critics, writers by profession, for whom to write is at once an art and a career, have constituted

classical language, and it is in their works that we must look for it ; but this language is not, in idiomatic French, the only one worthy of attention and study. Parallel with its pure and limpid course flows, or rather boils and rushes on, a language derived from another source, irregular, turbid, but strong and copious, and from which the language of books has borrowed more than it owns or even knows. This is the language of men of the world, of the army, and the court, who are placed too much outside of literary interests, leisure, and consideration, to make to themselves a religion of the forms of classical language ; who live at once near and far enough from the vulgar to borrow all that their speech has of picturesque and striking without adopting its homely peculiarities ; who stand, in short, too high in society, or rather, who are too much outside of society, not to be rendered more or less independent generally of received phraseology. Many of these men, however, have only derived from all these advantages a grotesquely incorrect diction, and the too apparent pretension of braving "grammar that knows to govern even kings."

But when this princely and sometimes cavalier language of camps and castles falls into the hands of a man of genius, as a Cardinal de Retz, or a Duke de St. Simon, it becomes, as it were, a phenomenon in language, a dialect of a superior nature, fit to figure in an anthology which is devoted not to purism, but genius.

CHAPTER III.

LITERARY PRECEPTS.

I.—THE WRITER.

1. *Originality and Individuality.*

ORIGINALITY is that literary virtue without which all others reduce themselves to nothing.

Whatever the cause, whether it be the ascendancy of one man or a collective authority, we may all of us, more or less, say, as did I know not what celebrated character, "I am born a changeling." We are not allowed time to be ourselves; something new and foreign imposes itself upon, or rather blends with us, in proportion as our faculties develop. We employ in alienating our liberty, or what I could willingly call our ingenuousness, half of whatever mind we have; and even if we have but little, we nevertheless succeed in this. In literature we hardly ever set out from nature; we come back, we gradually rise to it.

Writings under which we do not see a man are too abstract for the wants of a simple heart; we require, in order to have excited in us the interest we seek, all the variety of a mortal existence.

Each age has its individuality, which is at once

its limit and its force. We must attain the level of the age, and thence take flight, in hopes to rise above it.

The most individual creations are suggested or inspired.

It is better to be *pauper in opere suo* than rich with borrowed funds.

The germs of romanticism for the most part existed latently in the seventeenth century; many bold tentatives had taken place in the sixteenth. The changes which seem the deepest are brought about by the course of time, are suggested by the general spirit. The peculiarity of genius and the triumph of the individual mind is to give them the impress of eloquence.

To be able to do much is to be strong; not to do all we can implies a twofold strength. This latter force is the rarest in all spheres of human activity. In literature it belongs only to first-class men, and does not even distinguish them all, nor always. It is difficult not to put out our whole strength on every occasion; but every special quality is a quality only in the proper place and measure, and is nothing but a defect when it superabounds. This too common indiscretion has lost many admirable intellects, to whom it has seemed more convenient to concentrate than to extend themselves. We may, nevertheless, affirm, without denying the rights of individuality, or contradicting the old axiom,—

“ Nature, so fertile in distinguished minds,
Gives different talents to each author’s share,”—

we may affirm that the most special talent needs to generalise itself; that nothing exclusive is true; that in each talent a something should be found of all other talents; that the special gift each may have received cannot prosper without the concurrence of other gifts: and if it be objected that in order to this the latter must also have been bestowed, we boldly reply that they have been bestowed, seeing that a well-organised mind must possess them, although in different proportions. Indeed, this is in our opinion the characteristic of a well-constituted intellect. Genius of every kind has no doubt its weak side; but this would be still weaker if not fortified at all. Whoever goes on constantly requiring the same crop from his land exposes himself to see, in the long run, the plant that he cultivates die out or deteriorate. There is for the mind, as well as for the earth, a system of rotation.

Individuality is no more in literature than in society the one and only law. Literature is a social thing as well. Æsthetic truth is not more individual than every other truth, and the proper part of liberty here, as elsewhere, is freely to submit. Art would perish were these principles forgotten.

2. *Objectivity and Subjectivity.*

I would have writers either broadly objective or frankly subjective. Sometimes we have as much pleasure in meeting in a work with the author as

with the subject. It may be a fault in a book, but it has its charm too.

It is not alone objective truth that edifies in a work, it is subjective truth as well, that which dwells in the soul of the author.

An objective talent is impartial, and without pre-occupation; it sees things as they are, and blends with them nothing of its own: it is this talent alone that can reproduce the true colour of times, places, systems, religions. It is not candour, but it is better still. No candour could be equally candid. Subjective talents are in danger of altering everything by their prepossessions. Objectivity, which has none, leaves to all things their character and their physiognomy. It would be candour, the perfection of candour, if it judged; but this is not its office. A mirror cannot possibly judge.

Amongst the writers who have exercised a powerful influence, there are few who have not borne with them to the grave as a crown, but often as a crown of thorns, some one idea, the importance of the truth of which had haunted them from their youth up.

Every great writer, every poet, ought to be the incarnation of an idea. There must be a fusion, an identification of the author with the subject; the two must make only one. The author must communicate to his subject the colour of his own soul, and himself receive the hue of his subject.

A book is not a monologue; it would be a long *aside* that endured through a whole volume. One must

write with a view to, and in presence of, others; borrow, as it were, from the reader the language we mean to employ towards him; hear him while we are speaking to him; make each of our phrases an answer to his mute questionings; allow our words to be dictated to us by him. And yet these words must be our own. And in order to move the reader they must strike him as those of another while suiting him as if his. It is this happy combination that has always produced clever writers and true orators, and in proportion as either of these two elements—it matters not which—has been absent, eloquence has failed.

3. *Progress in the Writer himself.*

A literary life is a continual advance, where each important publication forms a step. It belongs to criticism to affirm the interval measured by each step; in other words, the progress achieved. In literature, as in morality, progress is inseparable from life; nay, progress is life itself. Life is a perpetual birth; insensible if taken at too short intervals, but signalling itself in every existence from time to time by certain acts that give the measure and form of the agent. These acts in the life of the writer are books. The least important may come last. That is not the question; but in the least important progress, development ought to assert itself. This is the rule, but how many exceptions there are to it!

Each writer, in his relations to society, is less a

man than a book ; and however sincere a book may be, it is seldom that it is not better than its author, whose chosen thoughts, best moments, whose quintessence, in short, it contains. People are indignant at the difference, sometimes the contrast between the two ; and, generally speaking, they are wrong,—wrong above all in crying out against hypocrisy. There is none here, there is only human weakness. It is not for having surpassed himself in his book, but for remaining inferior to his book, that the writer should be blamed. But how much should we not honour those excellent authors who are of still more value than their works!—I mean those men whose external life, admired by all, is even less beautiful than their domestic.

Every well-ordered life is a logical action, where each fact is the conclusion of one process of reasoning and the premiss of another. Action is an ordinary life ; works, in the life of an artist or an author, do not merely add themselves up, but beget each other. True progress consists in renewing ourselves. Every mind that stops short in its victory has only conquered for others, not for itself. Nay, it has not even conquered for others. The public has its conscience, which warns it that there is no progress, no life, where there is no renewal. The *élite* among critics are sensitive to immobility, and discover a principle of death in a series of successes which too closely resemble each other.

There are epochs in which we could say that

talent is born old, for after a few efforts it stops, and begins to revolve upon its own axis. Perhaps this phenomenon has never been so common as at present; perhaps no age has presented us with so many of these stranded, shipwrecked talents, over which the wave returns periodically to beat and half-lift, without ever being able to set them afloat again.

Be very sure that when we are always the same we are not true: for truth is flexible and fertile; truth is that royal road that renders whomsoever has been able to find it out, master of the whole country. Falsehood is a blind alley, that there is no getting out of save by turning back. But remark this,—indifference about truth is a species of—is the principle of—falsehood; truth in a human soul is faith in truth,—is the lively and spontaneous assent to great moral truths.

Is there anything sadder than those lives without a history, whose facts are all absorbed one in the other, and do not add themselves up? All the world has heard of that unfortunate, who, in a calculation upon which his fortune and his honour depended, always going on saying *one and one make one*, and never *one and one make two*, came to believe himself ruined and dishonoured, and lost his reason. Well, his dream is our history. In a great number of the literary lives of our epoch *one and one do make one*. Now turn from this to contemplate the life of a Racine. What a life! how much history in it! and what a logic in that succession of masterpieces!

II.—LITERARY PRECEPTS.

1. *Meditation—Inspiration—Taste—Timidity—
Simplicity—Power of Creating.*

The great, the sublime, is almost always something involuntary and unforeseen. The higher we rise in literary creation, the more it seems as though we get effaced, and no longer dispose of ourselves. The mediocre in our achievements is thoroughly our own. We feel this by our fatigue, our exhaustion. The great is given us. We write under dictation; we do not know the source, we cannot predict the arrival. It is ours, and yet not ours. What we are, then, we are by *grace*; and thus all poets have spoken of their *inspiration*, of a God in us, of a *mens divinior*. Remarkable testimony, and too little reflected upon! Oh, why will man, who in his artistic life so readily believes in *grace* and in *the Spirit*,—why will he in his moral life believe only in himself? Why not understand this confession of poets, and recognise in general that man is not the source, but the channel and the organ, of all that rises above the habitual level of his life; that he is then only a *medium* through which the Divine alternately appears and disappears?

What is this meditation, this slow and impassioned incubation of an idea? It is the increasing intimate identification of the writer with his subject, in order more especially to reunite all its parts, and to place them under a general point of view.

True meditation, as the word indicates, places us in the middle of things (*in medias res*), identifies us with them, makes us live with their life. To analyse is not to meditate; for analysis decomposes, and meditation, like a fertilising incubation, lovingly surrounds the totality of the fact submitted to it, warming itself by its heat, and communicating to it its own. Analysis never arrives at intuition, which in certain subjects is actual knowledge; this knowledge by intuition is the peculiar privilege of meditation properly so called.

Let us respect in each man, whether he be poet or no, the moment—so well named that of inspiration—when he says more than he knows, does more than he can, and becomes more than he is; that mysterious moment when he ceases to comprehend himself, when he honours himself not in what he himself is, but in the word that he has just pronounced, the act he has just accomplished; when, perhaps, he trembles at the unforeseen height on which that effort has placed him, because well aware that his own strength cannot sustain him there. It is the Titan raising himself beneath the mountain that crushes him, or some imprisoned god that sighs within our breast.

When purity of taste is not dependent on timidity of mind, it may well—at all events, in an epoch where bad example abounds—be referred to originality of character.

Taste does not always advocate timidity; boldness is in good taste whenever without boldness there would be no truth.

Make a human creature say a single word, or take a single step, and we shall soon see whether or no you can create. Some very correct minds are incapable of attributing one correct tone to a fictitious character. But, in general, women know how to make children talk ; and sometimes the most simple of them, when put to the test, shows herself an artist in this department.

2. *Love in Literature—Love of Nature—The True and the Beautiful.*

The love that our fashionable writers take pleasure in depicting is not chivalrous love, still less Platonic. What our age adores in woman is her beauty ; the woman that our age deifies is not Andromache, not Thekla, but rather Briseis or Armida ; love has become pagan once more, and what especially belongs to us in this repetition is to have mingled a certain species of mysticism with a voluptuous tone. Our age, at once sensual and metaphysical, has composed out of these two ingredients a something which is not coarse, but which is not chaste either. Pleasure, the idol of the nineteenth century, has multiplied soft and enervating images in the productions of art. Grace, elegance, are not merely elegant and graceful, but voluptuous as well. All our aspirations are towards the East, not as our original birthplace, but as the country of sunshine, perfume, and roses.

Men still kill themselves, but no longer from

love. It is to different passions that this deplorable honour henceforth belongs. Are we better or are we worse, since love no longer disposes of our life? This question is not without interest.

Although the love of nature be for certain souls a passion in the whole force of the term—that is, a suffering,—we may say in general that calm is requisite for the enjoyment of nature. The soul agitated by passion feeds upon itself alone, and consumes itself thus. It is when calm returns that we look around and nourish ourselves through the eye with the harmonious beauties of nature and art.

Without wishing to deny that primitive peoples may have felt—and better, perhaps, than we—the august charm and the majesty of creation, we must needs acknowledge that a certain way of feeling nature is peculiar to epochs of excessive maturity. An age that is civilised into disease gladly turns away from the spectacle of itself to that of the external world. Intimate sufferings cause it to feel a particular delight in this contemplation, that the uncultured man knows not of. The impression of natural beauty is not so simple as is imagined. It is only the social man who is in a condition to feel nature. The impression it produces is the result of a relation, often of a contrast; and the more this relation or this contrast multiplies in subdividing itself, the more penetrating and intimate the impressions we receive from nature.

The more we have cultivated our soul by social intercourse, and especially the more we have suffered

from it—the more, in short, society itself is disturbed and agonised, the more rich and profound is nature; mysteriously eloquent for the one who comes to her from out the ardent and tumultuous centre of civilisation.

A marvellous thing truly is the mystic marriage of nature with itself; the relations which, in our minds, intimately unite the most different parts of the great whole,—the animate with the inanimate, the visible with the invisible; matter and spirit; and in each of these spheres a being with another being. This unity, this universal harmony, is instinctively revealed to all minds; but some (and Aristotle declares that these are the sound intellects) are more sensibly struck by it, and are also more vividly impelled to realise it in discourse. If they have produced a thought, they eagerly seek out swaddling clothes for the new-born—that is to say, an image for their conception; they know no rest till it be found; it must be found, for it exists; nature cannot have failed to provide it. Nay, more than this, there are minds (Jean Paul has been said to be of this number) who proceed inversely, and go looking for a thought to fit their image. I know not what instinct warns them that such a dress must fit some figure, and find its man; that some nudity, as yet unknown to them, demands to be thus clothed; and, indeed, I am much mistaken if some of the happiest comparisons have not owed their existence to this singular process.

There is a truth I could wish to see all writers convinced of ; it is that the beauty of a production is not entirely in the lines, but between the lines ; less in what is written than in what is not ; less in this or that image than in that supple and continuous movement which has no visible expression, which only manifests itself in the more or less rapid succession of thought, in its more or less close texture, in the varied inflexions of its course, but which is none the less appreciable and touching to a well-constituted mind.

Truth has a power, a charm ; it is perhaps the first of literary talents, but it is also the rarest. Perfect truth of thought and expression, when it is accompanied by the grandeur of the object and the ideas, places the author in the highest rank. Pascal refused all manner of ornaments, and replaced them by a perfect truthfulness ; he is both great and true.

The evident relation of the good with the beautiful has led to great errors ; to the idea of the æsthetic culture of the soul, the idea that the development of taste is the best preparation for virtue. Far from this being the case, an ill-directed literary education will have for its result the perversion of the soul, will deceive it and give it a fictitious nourishment. Literary talent is a very great snare ; in sinful man it easily becomes an iniquitous wealth.

At a certain depth the good and the beautiful only make one.

The truly good and the truly beautiful find a sen-

sitive spot in all minds. Their intimate adaptation to the primitive wants of our soul makes them ultimately penetrate there.

A rhetorician who steals the form of Christian thought to make it a mere artifice of diction, is a citizen strutting about in royal robes, or, rather, a child who makes a rattle of a sceptre.

3. *Literary Precepts and Miscellaneous Observations— Rage for Reading.*

The conceit of being witty, and expressing ourselves well, is one of the most terrible demons.

In our days vagueness passes for grandeur; it is natural to believe that, of which we cannot see the end, to be immense. A false semblance of greatness is a fit characteristic of a sceptical epoch.

In times like ours (1834) there are, perhaps, few merits so significant as that of good sense, when joined to much power of imagination and sentiment; it characterises not only a sound, but a strong mind. Good sense may be sometimes sublime; it has very often been genius, and in certain cases moderation implies power.

It is not especially among letters that we have to look for well reasoned out, firm, and constant convictions: conviction is only an intellectual fact relatively to its object; in its essence it is a moral one.

In a strong intelligence and character, moderation is also force.

Let us belong to our own time by our most vivid emotions ; by our intellect let us belong to all times.

The prose of things is not the whole truth, though this has been often asserted, but it is a part of it, or, at all events, an aspect which we must take into account.

I see no difference between a rich man who despises the poor, and a clever man who despises the commonplace. This aristocracy of the intellect, so haughty and disdainful, which from the summit of its own complacency lets fall on every-day minds the *Væ victis* of Brennus, is as bad as any other, and worse than some others.

To begin to think in order to write, or because we want to write, is to renounce our best thoughts.

There are characters, the features of which are so delicate, that the pen fails to depict them ; there are things which draw tears of tenderness from the eyes of a friend, and which on paper would border on the ridiculous.

Have you not remarked that the most touching effusions are those of writers who are not habitually pathetic, when once the holy flame has taken their heart for altar ? They seldom surrender themselves, but when they do, it is more utterly and more simply than others. These souls, so severe to themselves, which are only concealed by dint of self-annihilation, have moments when they betray what they are.

A puerility does not become important because it has dropped from the pen of a great man.

In every epoch there are certain ideas floating in the air, confusedly present to all minds, fortunate gifts that we must seize hold of on the spot or see escape for ever. I do not know if he who has the talent of discovering has always, also, that of expressing them; perhaps the one does not imply the other; but rather I think that this double privilege belongs to ingenuous minds which have had little premeditated intention, if we may so say, or which, at least, have not had the one imputed to them. They have willed one thing, and they have done another. This is an accident common to the greatest writings; if their authors could return to pay a visit to posterity, this would teach them their own secret.

It is permissible, nay, even laudable, to be ignorant of our full worth, but we cannot with impunity wholly ignore it. The consciousness of our powers is a power the more; we cannot overlook them without disadvantage.

The majority of writers ought to retranslate themselves; there are but few thoughts that are born translated, that is, clothed with the power best fitted alike to express and transmit them. What we have in the first instance written for ourselves, should be written a second time for others.

Why should the false, which will not seduce us to-morrow, seduce us to-day? It is because to every epoch corresponds a certain form of the false, which then looks like the true. Later this falsity will cease be intelligible, and in consequence it will die out.

Glory is not a Bethesda, applause is not an expiation. Elsewhere and far away the true Siloam flows. Before the world indeed they may, but before God and the conscience never will literary successes redeem anything whatever.

At the bottom of the admiration inspired by works devoted to the praise of martial heroism we feel I know not what painful void ; this is not the case with regard to those that celebrate civilising heroism.

The affectation of the desire for unity is the disease of our epoch ; the true unity is to collect analogous facts in one single category.

A book formed of scattered thoughts has its advantages, and still more, its charm, but it has also its inconveniences. There have been no preliminary conferences between the reader and the author, no previous explanations of the meaning of the principal terms, of the point of view of the whole book ; they have embarked together for a rather long voyage without any thorough acquaintance, any perfect understanding of each other's language, and perhaps it will only be on landing that a word, which would at the first outset have enlightened and facilitated the whole, will get accidentally pronounced.

Never in any department whatever can the trouble or expense serve as a standard for the real worth of things.

None but God can make it a crime in any one not to be a Christian ; but absolute irreligion, impiety, is an odious blot. Atheism is not only an evil, but a

very ugly thing, and consequently nothing is less literary.

To read, enjoy, and it may be imitate the romances and poems of the day, is not to practise, still less to study literature.

There is no culture without literature, no literature without books. A course of rhetoric is not literature; it gives an inkling of everything, and shows one nothing.

Material misfortune fortifies the heart; it sometimes gives a certain asperity to the character, and rigidity to the ideas; the sufferings of the heart perhaps augment the personality, but they also add I know not what sorrowful grace to life and thought. Less unhappy, many a man of genius had been less eloquent.

We spend in expressing ourselves. Never without "an evident miracle," which will not take place, can that be said of the soul which a poet has said of a magic cup, "The more the vase poured out, the less it emptied itself." Every vase does empty itself in pouring out its contents; and, up to a certain point, what is true of the vase is true of the heart as well. The soul has its excesses, which weaken it as other excesses weaken the body; and reserved men, when this reserve is not the mask of sterility, preserve their soul as temperate men do their physical constitution; nay, this reserve is in general both a pledge and a principle of force. What we say of individuals may also be said of epochs and litera-

tures ; there, too, when the sap overflows, we know that it is exhausting itself.

We are always ill at ease in a borrowed character : we either fall short of, or caricature it ; we can only avoid inconsistency by exaggeration ; either we remain motionless, or move by a violent effort ; it is in vain that the system be true, we are always in a false position. This reminds one of the young German, whom his friends reproached with an excess of indolence and apathy. They found him one day preparing to jump out of the window. "I am making myself lively," said he.

A general and animated correspondence is the railroad of thought. Our ideas are no longer our own. This has its drawbacks as regards our religious life.

Literary journals are, or, at all events, ought to be, the small craft of science.

Wholesome reading includes a little poetry.

In reading much, we learn to read ill if we do not learn to read well ; and the more we read, the more we spoil our voice and our accent.

The period of the Restoration will one day bear in a quite serious sense that name which at present seems to us ironical. It has been fertile ; less, however, for itself than for us and for our children ; it has been the epoch of all the *revivals* in Europe. It will be to the nineteenth century what the fifteenth century has been to the whole of our modern era. Later, it will be better recognised ; at present, the conflict going on between the

conquerors obscures the victory and makes it seem doubtful; which, however, it is not. The political struggle is over, the human soul turns towards another prey, and the principal dispute is between matter and mind. Ere long we shall see the ground occupied only by industrialism (in all its possible applications) and immaterial ideas. Unless the soul abdicates, it is forcibly impelled in the way whence it has obstinately diverged to seek vagrant paths. Religion waits till society, disappointed in a thousand vain pursuits, returns to her out of breath and humbled. In the thick of the dust of the conflict now going on this conclusion escapes the prevision of the multitude, but it reveals itself to those to whom, thanks to the Gospel, the depths of human nature have ceased to be a secret. When infidelity has no longer any other option than between the most abject materialism and Christian faith, we must allow, for the honour of human nature, that it will be at its last gasp. Never has humanity in the mass given itself over to matter. Never has materialism organised a society. We must perish or go back to the truth.

In France wit has the gift of making everything attractive. One of the evils of the French mind is to mistake wit for talent, sometimes even for eloquence.

To read only one book is very often, however strong we may be, to place ourselves in the power of a book.

Every study in which the mind remains inactive, and does not give back in measure as it receives, in

a word, does not produce, is no more a study than seeing is looking. Our age is sick of over-reading, and of reading carelessly. Reading—which has been called an *occupied idleness*, and which might be called an *idle activity*—is the principal occupation of many persons whose thoughts, incessantly but weakly solicited by a thousand different subjects, everywhere die on the surface, and end by having no longer any vigour, spontaneity, or independence. Without a voluntary reaction of the reader upon the ideas of the author, reading is often rather an evil than a good. Swallowing is nothing unless we digest. Woe to him who forgets this! woe to him who renders himself guilty of that voracity, or rather, that imprudent appetite, which has caused an age to be compared to a *boa* distended with printed paper, whose digestion is a mere agony! Read, but think; and do not read unless you mean to think while reading, and to think after having read.

A good comedy might be written against the rage for plays, but it is clear that it never will. This subject heads the list of *reserved* subjects from which the theatre abstains. If an author were forced to write it, no player would act it, the inconsistency would be too great. The world is troubled with another rage, that of reading. Are we to be prevented protesting against this mania under the pretence that we, who object to all this reading, should abstain from writing? We do not know; we only see that the theatre is not the only tribunal open to the

opponents of the theatre, while the enemy of the other excess, if he wishes to be heard, is positively compelled to write. He might no doubt try the theatre, but not only would the mania we speak of prove a poor subject for a comedy, but is not a comedy a book? and are not spectators readers?

In order that there may be less reading we will endeavour to get read; and to increase our chance of being so, we will insert our thoughts in one of the publications of that species which represents and most conveniently satisfies the voracious appetite of that thousand-headed boa constrictor which feeds or distends itself with printed paper. These new paper-mills are infinite in their productions. A journal or a review is a book without an end, a perpetual book. It may have a special object, but its true scope, and the one which really procures it the most readers, is the faculty that it has of affording at regular intervals a sure repast for this hydra. Ordinary books appear suddenly, as far as the public in general are concerned, or else they have to be too long waited for; and then they are books, tough bits where there is no lack of bones, and the monster's teeth have got worn out in measure as this violent hunger has increased; whereas a journal is a sort of hash, which suits the debilitated jaws of the multitude, and the "*blasé*" taste of some. It is many books in one, and there is something about it, even down to the variety of types and the multiplicity of titles, which pleases and attracts even the most serious eye.

III.—LITERARY CRITICISM.

1. *Theory and Practice.*

Literature has everywhere preceded literary theories, the fact has forerun the idea. Neither, so far as I can discover, has the greatest display of works of art ever synchronised with the greatest perfection of theory; and, generally speaking, the most illustrious in practice have not been the most consummate theorists. This rule admits of exceptions; yet these exceptions prove the rule if, as we cannot doubt, it be true that those men who are equally strong in synthesis and analysis, obtain their inspiration at the price of a momentary but complete oblivion, not indeed of art, but of analysis.

For the very reason that I do not believe in the perfect spontaneity of philosophy, I do not believe in the perfect spontaneity of literary ideas. I see in them a symptom, an effect, even more than a cause; and in proportion as new ones make their appearance, I recognise in them a sign of the times, the expression of a social want, the presentiment or pre-sage of a renovation. I only refuse them one thing, and that is the honour of determining the character of the productions of art, the power of creating literary epochs. Those great eras do not depend upon a theory, and I remark that in the periods where systems upon art have reared their head highest, either art has been barren, or it has laughed at those systems.

So it is in every department. Men seek after methods, methods are seeking for their men. When the man is there, the method has not yet arrived; when it has come, the man is there no longer. The promulgation, the defence of methods (and this is true elsewhere than in literature), often devolves on men of the second order. . . . It is when a doctrine is strong that it attracts strong men, and finds its champions among literary magnates.

The great renovators, the Protestants of every kind, have had forerunners that they have thrown into oblivion. These names, tardily evoked, obtain indeed esteem, but do not excite applause. Their martyrdom, entirely consisting in opinion, has not been able to inspire any with the enthusiasm of pity. They lacked genius, and in the order of literary things it is only genius that posterity remembers.

2. *Precepts.*

Nothing so bad as a mania for admiration and a fictitious enthusiasm; it would be dangerous to have a too easy belief in heroes and saints, and we must not regret that the way that leads to glory is narrow as that which leads to life. It is no evil that one should have to stand and wait single file at the door of the temple of memory; and, as far as saints go, if it be good that their light should shine, it is not good that it should dazzle.

Good sense is especially rare in the domain of

theoretical criticism; here good models become posthumous tyrants; they must be imitated in everything, their qualities and defects alike espoused. In literature France is the country of *routine*. If a man permits himself good sense, he becomes original and powerful by that alone. Good sense is always original, for conventionality and tradition constantly tend to substitute themselves for it.

Impartiality is of two kinds, because it may have two principles; or, if you will, there are two impartialities. I leave out of the question the impartiality of calculation and interest, but this is not the only substitute for the true impartiality. This last is born of justice, and justice, in a healthy soul, is a positive affection, a passion. It does not only carry a balance, but palms and a sword; does not only judge, but hates and loves as well. Its condition is at once that of judge and partisan—passionate partisan and upright judge. It implies faith in duty, and in the eternal value of moral facts. It belongs to that growth of the soul which does not depend upon age; which does not blossom and fade during the illusion of earliest years, but is green as ever beneath the icicles of winter. Such is the true impartiality, which its name does not designate correctly, if to be thus impartial is to be invariably of the *party* of truth. The weakness of religious and moral principles has produced a very different impartiality, fraught with the lassitude and the indolence of a soul from which doubt has gradually drained all its sap. Its attribute, its spirit,

is everywhere to create a level; it brings forward in turn every idea, every principle, which has any right of citizenship in the human breast; its chief anxiety is to keep them all pretty much on the same height; it lifts what is sinking, presses down what is rising; it prevents encroachments, or rather, it just represses one thing by another;—resembling clockwork in its perpetual oscillations, if, indeed, like clockwork it could occasion movement; but this is not given to it; an essentially negative force, it can create nothing, nor does it even preserve anything.

3. *Mediocrity: the part it plays.*

It has been very justly observed that the gift of invention, in which some very great minds have been deficient, has sometimes distinguished talent of an inferior order.

It is mediocrity that *corrects*; it plays the part of editor.

We must make up our mind in literature to defer sometimes to inferiors. Common sense is a hundred miles from genius, but up to a certain point it is the judge of genius.

While before a court of law an author can only be held responsible for what he has said, it is very frequently on what he has not said that criticism pronounces him guilty.

The charge of tendency, justly decried in the sphere of law, is a very fair weapon in criticism.

SECOND SECTION.

POETRY.



CHAPTER I.

ART.

I.—ART IN GENERAL.

1. *Its Definition—Object—Mission—Condition.*

ART, which we must not confound with artifice, is in all departments nothing more than the earnest search of the means conformable to a given end; so that, in order to denounce art, we must first of all show that everything, and the best possible, can be hit upon at once.

The object of art is no less complex than the being who conceives it, and the being to which it addresses itself. Art is man himself, and the whole man; but just as in man every action and every emotion requires an idea for its centre, just as contemplation is the peaceful and luminous throne of the moral being, so too in every artistic composition the ideal should brood over the formal and contingent, and inundate them with its light; and all the emotions which the soul experiences should rise, to purify and calm them-

selves, into the highest region of internal contemplation. The speculative element is the noblest of those that art introduces into its compositions; it is the crown, the royal insignia of the greatest poets: profound view, sentiment, or divination of what belongs to the soul and to life; instinctive and sublime philosophy, this has been, from the time of Homer down to Shakspeare, from Shakspeare down to Goethe and Byron, the distinguishing mark, the predominant element of those geniuses, each of whom must remount or descend through centuries to find his peer; and in general, the proportion in which this special ingredient is mingled with those others that constitute poetic genius, affords us the exact measure of each poet's greatness.

Art in its practice springs from something more living, concrete, and powerful than a theory. It depends on life, on that of the artist and of his times. In order that a real and sincere change should come about in art, the man, the people, must change; and this change of a man and a people cannot be the result of certain æsthetic formulas merely.

Art has certainly its own place in life, but it has nothing to do with the formation of our convictions; these come under the sole jurisdiction of science and conscience.

Art, taking the word in its true sense, is certainly little in favour in a time when to fascinate, to dazzle, or to bewilder, is become the triumph, and indeed the object of art; in short, art—comparable in this to

religion itself—is not a perpetual constraint for the mind, but aims at teaching us, by means of some discipline, easily to do well what before we did ill easily : and just as the moral law, gradually identified with our soul by means of religion, ends by assuming within us all the power and grace of an instinct, so the artist ends by obeying art as a second nature, and even becomes more *natural* in observing its rules than one could even be in neglecting them.

Art, like Christianity, like civilisation, has for its mission to bring us back to nature ; and how difficult in every respect do we find our return to it!

Art alone is competent to create works that are final. In this sphere no achievement effaces or excludes another. You are well aware that this is not the case elsewhere. In science, in politics, each discovery is but the resting-place or the fulcrum of some other discovery. The glory of some labourers in these fields remains ; their work gets absorbed ; this is pointed out from above as a step in the ladder on which the foot once rested, but one which we shall no more have to pass. The works of art are the myriad editions of nature ; editions, each of which is complete in itself, while at the same time serving to complete others. It is man, life, the incessantly new and surprising reproduction of a mystery that does not change. It is, with the exception of the oracles of inspired wisdom, the most complete and profound revelation that man can receive.

Madame de Stael wrote too entirely with her whole

soul, and that a soul filled with too earnest wants, to be a perfect artist. One is only an artist, in the full force of the word, at the cost of an impartiality too complete perhaps for the approval of conscience ; it is either the peace or the indifference of the soul that makes the perfect artist ; and if Fénelon, for example, fully enjoyed this privilege, it was not only in virtue of his genius, but because from the very beginning of his career the Divine Giver had exonerated him from *seeking*. Others are artists on different conditions ; on condition of willing to be so, to be so always, to be nothing else. Such dispose of their ideas, their ideas do not dispose of them.

Second-class minds have more than once effected important revolutions in the domain of arts ; and the greatest cleverness is to appear *à propos*.

The severe regularity, the scientific composition, of a work of art seems as a sign of imperturbable balance of mind to a superficial glance only ; the most passionate are sometimes the most austere ; and the force that regulates may have the same principle as the passion that carries away, and the enthusiasm that creates.

2. *Art and Nature.*

We may affirm that in general, and in every sphere, it is art that brings back to nature. We are not naturally so natural as is supposed. Barbarism is never simple.

There is one sense at least where nature and art

form a contrast, where art is not equal to nature. Neither man, nor the conviction which is the whole of man, should be a work of art. A man should not be a system—this all the world allows; but neither should a man be a poem.

The imagination constantly furnishes fresh fuel to passion; but I hold passions nourished on imaginary elements to be less dangerous than those which, in the dearth of ideas, are reduced to fall back upon themselves, or to seek their aliment in the positive of life.

A book is always a product of art; a man is the work of nature and circumstance; the light that emanates from him is more akin to us, and more certain, than that of books.

3. *Architecture and Music.*

Unlike other arts, which have for object the expression of the ideas of the soul by the imitation of external objects, architecture and music, enfranchised from this imitation, only aspire, the one by sounds, the other by constructions, to produce a state of the soul; so that, if they imitate anything at all, it is the soul itself, and only the soul. They are imitative merely in the same manner as a man's walk, gesture, and glance. Other arts render forms by forms, colours by colours, objects by their names, which mark them in their entirety. In them there is no passage from one nature into another, but this is what takes place in music and architecture, which we may call *great metaphors*.

CHAPTER II.

POETRY.

I.—POETRY IN GENERAL.

1. *Its Definition—Source—Unity and Diversity—Cause—Seat and Mission.*

THE history of poetry is not exclusively and identically the history of works written in verse. Poetry dwells in prose writings as well; nay, is necessarily met with there, for poetry is less a class of writings than a breath unequally but generally diffused throughout literature: it is whatever raises us from the real to the ideal; whatever brings the prosaic in contact with our imaginations; whatever in any intellectual work echoes within the soul; it is the beauty of all beautiful things; it penetrates into spheres apparently most foreign to it; and what Voltaire has said of happiness may be equally said of poetry,—“She resembles fire, whose gentle heat secretly insinuates itself into all other elements, descends into rocks, rises in the cloud, reddens the coral in the sand of the seas, and lives in icicles that winters have hardened.”

It is with mirth as with poetry when they are

both alike genuine, the first can live upon nothing as well as the second.

Sensibility, which is the imagination of the soul, just as imagination is, perhaps, only the sensibility of the mind, is not one with passion any more than that it is one with virtue. We may, with a good deal of sensibility, be prone to passion; perhaps, however, we are the less so in proportion to our sensibility, for what diffuses can hardly concentrate. But sensibility, which is but a talent or a grace, has, no doubt, much charm, and much affinity with poetry.

In poetry and in eloquence the beautiful and grand must spring from the commonplace. Whether we will or no we needs must return thither. All that remains for us is to be new while repeating the old, and to be ourselves in becoming the echo of the whole world.

Poetry, that enchantment of every human life, has its source in our souls, and from thence spreads over all the objects of the world, which it transfigures, and whose substance it renews. While science in some sort subjects our mind to them, poetry subjects them to us, renders them conformable, assimilates them to us. Things become what we are. Thus we may say, that of all our possessions our ideas are the most unalterable and safe from attack; it is there, at least, that we must be assailed in order to be truly despoiled: what nature and fortune give us is hardly ours; but nothing is more our own than what we give, or, at least, add to them,—I mean our ideas. The true happiness, the true misery of man are in

himself; he is his own destiny; his soul is mistress of his fate: well for him if he be master of his soul.

But poetry shares our misery, it is agitated with all our uneasiness; like us, it goes, comes, flies, never rests. From all objects, all feelings, it asks some infinite perspective; it halts nowhere; its flights fail long before the goal is reached, and it seems to exist only to recall to man the vague idea of some unknown end, of some attainment, some possession, of the nature of which it is ignorant, and whose true name it cannot reveal.

Is the rest of the world like us? I regret all that the past hides in its abyss; I would have it all remain ours. I regret not only the monuments that crumble, but the thoughts that vanish away, the voices that die in their first echo. I especially regret poetic thoughts: others are rediscovered or repeated; the one is a substitute for the other. Poetic thought alone is never replaced; we may do other and better, but a poetic thought can no more be repeated than a soul. Each creation of the kind, by the very fact that it is poetical, is unique and irreparable. What has been said by one poet will never be said again by another.

But can we preserve everything? Must we not yield to oblivion millions of lines and millions of thoughts? All these are only present, only living, in the Divine memory, where the least as well as the greatest existences impress or reflect themselves immortally. This great memory will one day come to the aid of

our weak ones; facts will rise from the grave, the past will revive, we shall ourselves live over again our vanished years; crime, self-forgetting as virtue, will remember and melt away in anguish.

Poetry, as a whole, springs from the soul of man at once, fuses all his life, and therefore should represent it all. Or if there be several kinds of poetry, genius should embrace them all, and reduce them to unity. There is one poetry of thought, another of imagination, a third of sentiment, a fourth of action. This last displays itself in action; it does not hold a lyre, but alternately the sword of the soldier, the balance of the judge, the staff of the pilgrim the spade of the labourer, the fathoming-line of the sailor, the chisel of the artist. Such poetry belongs to all, and often bursts forth more especially in those who do not pique themselves on its possession, and to whom the very name of poetry is unknown. But the poetry of action is the type and indication of a written poetry, superior to that of colours, of images, of the senses, and even of the thoughts and feelings. If the verb, despite its excellence, is only valuable through the substantive that carries it,—if sentiment and thinking are precious only when life confirms and embodies them,—poetry-rises in measure as it most resembles action, action which alone is life, and the whole of life, since it supposes all its elements, concentrates and fertilises them.

It has been thought that poetry is an infancy of the soul; it must have belonged, in a quite peculiar

sense, to the infancy of nations and of the human race. It was then that, free as yet from the knowledge of facts, the mind transfigured the world to its own image; and perhaps poetry is nothing more than the unlimited liberty, the sovereignty of thought. Poetry was then everything in the intellectual world; it was the philosophy of the youthful universe. Once arrived in the region of science, oppressed beneath the whole burden of acquired knowledge, but having always the same need of air and space, the human mind seeks both in another region, that of metaphysical speculation. If poetry was the philosophy of early ages, philosophy is perhaps the poetry of our era; it is a new method of recovering liberty; it is, perhaps, a second childhood; but the first, nevertheless, holds its ground in some souls. In each generation the human mind in every man reverts to its starting-point; each new man is a primitive man. Education and example regulate this, but human nature resists in some,—perhaps, to a certain point, in all. Thus, from time to time, pristine poetry reappears in certain spirits who have kept, have preserved a greater part of their childhood.

Poetry, which in every case is the highest and most intimate expression of human nature, nevertheless expresses in certain souls nothing more than a subjective truth, and that suffices it; and it ought even to suffice us, if, in the songs of the poet, we only seek the different modifications of his soul, the

individual result of an individual intercourse with nature. This result is in itself worthy of our interest and sympathy. What describes one man describes man, and we may say that in this respect anecdotes are as valuable as history.

We may conceive, and we even know by experience, another kind of poetry; and it is, I think, that of the princes of the art,—a poetry engendered by a more tranquil, serene, and lofty contemplation of human things,—a poetry which comprehends everything, feels everything, and that nothing perverts; which guesses all, and wonders at nothing prophetic,—a poetry whose accents, properly speaking, are not those of one man, but of the human race; which tells not what an individual has felt, but what has been felt by the human being ever since the fall that destroyed the simplicity of his nature and perhaps, by that very fact, created all that is poetry,—finally, a poetry which may, in a human and natural sense, be looked upon as a revelation, and whose words—of an import, perhaps, unknown to the voice that uttered them—should be gathered up with earnestness and respect.

Poetry! poetry! the emptiest of all words, or the most significant,—the most frivolous of all things, or the most important. Methinks it is but now that I understand all that thou mayest be. Arrived at that period of life when for so many men poetry has ceased to exist, I feel thee nearer to me, more potent over my life, more positive in my thoughts, than ever

thou wert before. I do not confound thee with thy vain image; and such as I conceive thee, thou appearest to me as the most complete personification of humanity, as its living epitome; thou sayest all that is, or rather *art* all; thou art its last and most intimate expression; above, below thee, there is nothing; thou art the truth of things, of which prose is but the disguise; thou containest their secret, which unconsciously thou dost betray. Thou art the *word* of fallen nature; and thy earliest strains were exhaled at the gates of paradise, beneath the flaming sword of the cherubim.

There was no poetry in Eden. Poetry is creative; to be a poet is to remake the universe; and what had man in paradise to create? And why should he have remade the universe? When Innocence retreated tearfully from our earth, she met Poetry on the threshold; they passed close by, looked at each other, and each went her way,—the one to heaven, the other to the dwellings of men. “But,” you will ask me, “what was it then that, ere sin entered into the world, filled the space that is now filled by poetry? Had the soul then empty chambers? Did the soul, which is only action, conceal within it a passive portion? Or can it be that it has widened since man has fallen? What previously went on in that obscure inner region, which we cannot figure to ourselves deprived of poetry and thought, if you say truly poetry was not?” I am not careful to reply. This only I know, that health is unconscious;

that an order which had never been interrupted, and was not threatened with interruption, would not perceive itself. Even in our present constitution, it is not health, it is convalescence that is poetical. Just as certain plants only yield all their fragrance to the fingers that crush them, so it is only in a state of suffering that certain affections utter all their poetry. True poetry does not, indeed, always express regret, desire, or hope; we must not seek for these sentiments at the basis of all poetical works whatever, but you will find them at the root of poetry in general, even when it is gay and playful. Its essential character reveals its origin. And why should not the incommensurable disaster that gave birth to virtue give birth to poetry as well? This genealogy does not render it contemptible. The pearl, because it is a product of disease, is no less a pearl; and poetry, that pearl of intelligence and life, reflects on our brow some pale rays of the glory that has faded away from it.

But whatever opinion be adopted on this subject, one thing is at least certain, that poetry, although creative, is so far from disclaiming allegiance to the law of truth, that, on the contrary, it is truth itself. It is this because it is man, and man in his deepest feelings and most spontaneous thoughts. Poetry is inherent in man, and he it is who gives it to things. Events and external objects are, so to speak, but a neutral substance, which receives its colour and its significance from our soul. Poetry is not, as has been

said, an exaggeration, an embellishment of reality; vague and arbitrary explanation; the poet rather grasps realities in their ideal character, and this ideal he bears within himself. It is impossible in any other way to account for the Apollo of the Belvedere, and all other creations of art. Nature has given the reality, man bestows the ideal. It is thus that humanity manifests all that it contains; hence poetry may be considered as a revelation, perfect in its kind, since it is but an involuntary avowal. Art comes later, voluntary, conscious, deliberate, taking account of its method; but poetry, in its origin, taking it at the point where it first springs forth, bears this character of inspiration and spontaneity: it is born, not made, and whoever makes it is no poet.

The great problem is to be at once individual and universal, to express one's self and human nature both. There are distracted epochs when, in describing what we ourselves are, we are not sure either of expressing humanity or our own selves. Sentiments complicated by ideas, or ideas exalted by facts, create in the soul, or rather in the mind, I know not what fictions of individuality and humanity. I know not what phantom we take for self, and which often binds us to humanity by the very slightest ties possible. We are living in one of these epochs now, and true poets now-a-days are those who know how to tear themselves away from such influences, who can pierce through the clouds to the light, and save the

purity of their inspiration from the general disorder. It is refreshing to read them, delightful to steep ourselves in their truthful poetry. But it is remarkable that in general it is not the least learned or least cultivated who appear the most ingenuous; and candour is very far from being proportioned to ignorance. Whether with regard to individuals or to epochs, we have the same observation to make. Between the two extreme points of barbarism and culture there extends a region of semi-culture, of superficial instruction, the region of men and of epochs alike transitory, and it is in these that we find the minimum of nature and of truth. The famous saying of Bacon about religious truth might be applied to poetry, which is, as we have said, the truth of human nature,—A little culture removes, much brings us back to it.

Poetry resides more especially in the conception of a work—in a parent idea, in the movement which is also the idea; in fact, in many things before we come to the language itself, to the form, or image. There is often as much poetry between the lines of a poem as in those lines. Such poetry is not to be described in detail, scarcely to be analysed; the expressions, if you detach them from each other, will not perhaps strike you as very remarkable; but combined they form, as it were, a total expression, the unity, the organic and living continuity, the intimate connection of which make a profound impression and leave an abiding memory. Such a work is remem-

bered as a single idea, a single phrase, a single word.

Great poets, it is true, have not shrunk from presenting us with terrible spectacles ; they have had no pusillanimous regard for our sensibility ; but their action upon thought has always proved itself stronger than the strongest emotions they permitted themselves to excite. Emotions have never been their ultimate end. Through the medium of the sensitive man, whose fibres they did not fear to rend, it was the intellectual and moral man that they aspired to reach.

The beautiful is the proper object of imagination, as the true of reason. The ugly is in poetry only a passing shadow. Evil, no doubt, has its poetry, but even here it is the poetry, not the prose of evil that we ask from the poet. If the question be merely one of seeing things in their actuality, without raising ourselves to their ideal, there is no need for the poet to exert himself: it was ideas that we asked from him ; as to sensations, we can easily procure them without his aid ; we have only to go down into the street,—nay, we have only to remain at home.

There is a treasury of poetry in the souls of all children.

The poetic instinct mingles in some measure with all strong and beautiful natures.

Poetry is found wherever there is enthusiasm—that is to say, fervour for an immaterial end. The dust and odour of ancient libraries, the gloom of those

crypts of literature, have for their investigator all the charm of freshest images and freshest poetry. Thus men who often decline the gift of poetry are poets in spite of themselves.

Fine arts, poetry in particular, are the voice of humanity, the expression beneath mutable forms of what it contains in itself of immutable, and consequently of common to all its constituent beings. It is for having touched forcibly and truly that invisible lyre, which echoes in unison in all human souls, that a poet is adopted by humanity itself, whose thought he has spoken ; for in the poet, in the artist, humanity only seeks for an organ of what it thinks, an echo of what it says, an impress of what it is. It is for this reason, too, that a poet is known to posterity. Humanity, which does not die, attaches itself to truth, which is deathless. Talent, in its highest degree, is perhaps nothing more than this very truth ; at all events, talent has nothing universal and durable without it. This alone accredits it with all men, in all places, and in all times. No doubt there is always something in works of art that, being accidental and temporary, cannot resist the ordeal of the ages, some forms to which following generations will have to extend a kind of indulgence, but this indulgence costs little when beneath the forms of another age we recognise ideas that can never grow old, and beneath a superannuated costume feel the beatings of a human heart. It is through the heart, not the mind, that all nations are fellow-citizens, and

all ages contemporaneous. It is by the heart that the identity of human nature is incessantly established.

The mind is skilful in dividing; the thoughts that unite individualities spring from the heart. It is with these thoughts that poetry must on pain of death eternally link itself. What could we think of a literature that disowned them, or of one which should have no moral ideas of any kind; which, blowing out with its breath one after the other all their lights, should lead its readers into a sombre desert or a fantastic region; which should, in a word, while creating for human beings, absolutely separate itself from human nature? Man can lend himself to all the sallies of imagination; he consents to follow its adventurous bark through the narrowest and most perilous straits; but when once it has broken the tie that bound it to reality, he either ceases to follow it at all, or follows it without sympathy, with impatience, or anxiety.

That which has remained in the heart of man after his unhappy fall is for him a religion. He attaches himself to these fragments, which are at least those of truth. He lovingly preserves these remnants of his ancient opulence. He seats himself weeping on these ruins; he will not have them taken from him. Perhaps he knows that such ruins are the cornerstone of the colossal edifice which shall one day arch high above his consoled race its lofty and tutelary dome. Whosoever insults these ruins insults man's wretchedness, despoils his indigence.

Humanity cannot afford to hold cheap the feeble beliefs that remain to it ; it pronounces an anathema on the hand that would fain outrage those fragments, and heap up fresh ruins amongst those that already exist.

Without poetry the loftiest genius cannot aspire to sovereignty. Poetry addresses itself to the great public, and to the most sensitive portions of every public. The sonorous vibrations of this universal organ penetrate further and echo longer than all others.

Poetry has the complex attribute of seeking truth outside of *reality*, in order to mould it in human speech—in speech, that marvellous thing which, although the organ of a fallen race, yet lends itself to the expression of all ideas anterior to the fall. *Truth* I said outside of *reality*, but these two ideas are not separable, and the one without the other is not poetry. Yet this is what those have appeared to believe who, led by a true though vague instinct, have pressed beyond the real without winging their flight towards the true ; those who have put in the place of the truth an ideal either arbitrary, relative, or partial, which caused imagination to spread its wings only in order to bring it back to its starting-point by another way. In general, poetry has ceased to be a *constitution* of the human race, a prolonged echo of the truths that exiled humanity had saved from its great disasters ; always true in a measure, else it would have ceased to be poetry, it

has coined its gold, subdivided it, reduced it into thinner and less weighty truths, blended it with a deteriorating alloy, brought it insensibly into contact with the reality it should have surmounted. Through what remains to it of truth, it is still the charm and consolation of elevated imaginations; but its high functions, its prophetic missions, have ceased: it governs society less than society governs it; it can no longer constitute or determine anything: intuition, which is the true name of its effect upon souls,—intuition, that other conscience, is, like conscience properly so called, benumbed; and if we still ascend to the truth of things in theory and application, it is by means of redoubled efforts, that stretch almost to breaking every chord of thought—that is to say, of mediate or reflective reason.

Is this the fault of poets? It is that of all the world. Is it open to poets to confer once more upon themselves their ancient powers, and to re-enter into the plenitude of their attributes? Can they do anything but gradually ascend towards the source, towards the primitive ideas that bind together man—the family and society—with a different cement to that of science and of law? Long will it be ere poetry can solder together the fragments of its falling sceptre; but these fragments are beautiful, and in the present day he who succeeds in picking up one of them will be a king among us. Wondrous to say, the circle described by civilisation has brought us from analysis to analysis, from refinement to

refinement, in face of nothingness, and we have only to choose between it and the A B C of the human race. We have nothing more to learn in academies, but seated on the benches of an infant school everything would be new and fresh to us: we have completely forgotten what is taught there; indeed, it is not certain that even on those very benches we should find the first truths still taught. Every generation does not recommence the human race; for we now make it begin life at the point where the men of early ages looked on life as consummated. The truths of the young world are found too simple, too elementary, that is to say, too strong, even for children; their form at least robs them of their early majesty; they no longer appear compact, in an immediately synthetical condition; the trunk, divided a countless number of times, has become a tightly bound bundle of rods: it remains to be seen whether poetry can rediscover those great and solemn forms, that simplicity adapted to intuitive truths; whether it can reproduce something of the accent of early humanity, and whether the present humanity will recognise that accent and be thrilled thereby.

2. *On the Disinterested Nature of Poetry.*

Yes, poetry is essentially disinterested, is but too much so; it folds its wings at the rough contact of reality; it has no intercourse save with the idea; but safe from the incursions of reality, it yields itself up

more completely to that idea ; it inhales and absorbs it all ; it intoxicates itself with a cup whence all the coarser juices have been extracted ; it goes to the bottom of every emotion ; it feels in one sense much more, and in another much less, than the soul engaged with reality ; more superficial in one respect, it is more profound in another. Poetry very often is fuller than life, just because it is not life ; nevertheless, life does not give up all its advantages ; it has certain simplicities and cries of nature, the secret of which is almost entirely confined to itself.

Poetry is in itself indifferent and impartial ; prose is less impassive. Poetry aspires to the ideal ; it lives on contemplation, compromises itself little in the choice of its subjects. The poet sees and selects from on high and afar, and hardly inquires about what is near at hand. An age which becomes increasingly prosaic loses and gains at the same time, —loses in coming down from the ideal, gains in drawing nearer to reality. Poetry draws back a step ; prose takes a step in advance.

Is there not a race of minds which live less amid things than ideas of things ; which, just as the dialectician feeds on notions of being, nourish themselves with images of things ; which, in a word, rather dream that they live than really live ? This mode of existence places a man indeed above all littlenesses ; but we may well ask whether it constitutes a profound life, one truly earnest, truly human. Does not poetry itself lose somewhat in detaching itself so entirely

from the reality whence it proceeds, and fixing itself thus solitary in aërial heights? Has the Divine hand, which in the beginning co-ordinated poetry and life, permitted any to be thus purely poetical without injury to poetry itself? No doubt, poetry is the highest impartiality of thought; but can it be true that one is a poet in proportion to the lack of intensity and reality in our lives? and is the transformation of the man into a thought in very truth the idea of poetic genius? These questions, we think, deserve examination.

The literary history of our age will, perhaps, say that at no other time has there been a more complete separation between poetry and conviction, between the poet and the man. Even that entirely *personal* poetry, which disproportionately dilates in the moral void of the epoch, contains little individual truth, little humanity. But, strange to say, for the very reason that convictions are rare, poetical material abounds; for a conviction has always some character of exclusiveness, while scepticism is free to gather and explore everything. The sad thing is to see poetry from the heights of its indifference pounce down upon what there is of most serious and most holy, to see religion serve as prey to frivolous minds, for whom it is a subject of heroic verse and nothing beyond.

The part that French manners have assigned to woman has done an incalculable injury to poetry. Object at once of a mocking contempt, and of an

idolatry which is also a contempt; mixed up with all affairs, but excluded from her true domain, woman in France is unable to bestow on domestic relations the charm of that influence which she exerts in other countries. Now the half of human affairs hinge upon this single point; from family life flows all that is most potent, most dear and sacred, the love of country, and even public spirit; on the character of marriage the principal characteristics of national existence depend; so that, to date from Christianity, the rehabilitation of woman has changed the whole of history. It is easy to understand how much French literature has lost by that lightness of opinion on the subject of morals, and that perpetual ridicule of marriage, which are in great part an effect of that very literature. Hence domesticity, cordiality, tenderness, have been too often absent from our poetry, which in these important respects has been more than Athenian.

3. *Poetry and Scepticism.*

We have in philosophy fragments of opinion; in morals, fragments of principle; and even this is perhaps saying too much. Everything is true; nothing is true: the mind grasps at all things, without attaching itself to any. We had before become acquainted with a scepticism terrifying, because terrified; which was nothing else than reason in despair; which resembled faith,—implied, contained, a species of faith,—a faith, shall I say, in the necessity of faith;

which struggled against the darkness, and if conquered, cursed it. The scepticism of our days has no longer this character; men have fallen from despair to *ennui*: and when I speak of *ennui*, it is not that of an Attila embarrassed by his superfluous forces, and seeking employment for them; it is an impotent and rickety *ennui*, which has not even the remnants of energy necessary to prompt the getting out of self; no desire is keen enough, no impulse passionate enough, to vary its monotony; no grief sufficiently violent to awaken alarm or pity. The former scepticism walked on thorns; this sinks ankle-deep in mud.

Is a scepticism like this poetical? Yes, if nothingness can be so; no, if there be not any poetry without ideas, or, in default of ideas, a definite state of the soul: that which has no name, which cannot have any, which the soul itself knows not how to designate, can offer no material for poetry; the torpor of the soul is never poetical.

It sometimes seems to me (it is an error, I confess, but one into which I am for ever falling) that poetry is no longer anything more than an imitation of poetry; and that people only write odes, epics, ballads, verses, now-a-days, because they used to be written formerly. So much is certain, that for a long time, and it may be still, styles have been cultivated which have no root in our present manners, and which now lack a certain actual truth, of which they once bore a very vivid impress. Romanticism,

which was at first but a reaction of the Gothic against the classical, and, so to speak, of one imitation against another, had at all events the merit of breaking sacramental forms and destroying the fetishism of style. In our literature it has led to a profound modification, to an increasingly thorough alteration of ancient types: from conventional they have grown natural; from abortive, actual; from false, in short, true and sincere. These forms of art no longer rest entirely upon hypothesis; the poet no longer necessarily transports himself out of his time and character; poetry aspires to becoming actual; but the real revolution is still far from having been accomplished; and under one form or other I still see the factitious on all sides. For the rest, an age which in architecture, religion, philosophy, has so little of its own, can hardly have a poetry of its own either.

We live in a time when art has compromised its character by taking itself for its own object, thus trying to make itself absolute instead of relative, as it is, and should remain; forgetting that its beauty, force, and dignity are properly derived from a felt reality. It contemplates from afar, I do not say from on high, the affections and creeds of humanity, and out of these cursorily observed and half-guessed forms it composes the world of its creations. The modern poet seizes the objects of general interest on the wing, and, without appropriating them to himself, appropriates them to his designs. What tortures society is only for him a more or less happy, more or

less fertile theme. This indifference must not be confounded with that supreme calm in which genius is constantly wrapped,—a calm essential to the art of poetry, but which, very far from resting upon apathy, springs from the contrast of a stirred soul and a peaceful mind. The property of true poetical genius is to feel more intensely than any one, and to contemplate as though it did not feel. Our clever moderns do not live in this region, let them say what they will. Frivolous in life and character, they take up by preference grave and even infinite subjects. Humanity, the poet *par excellence*, lets its grand poetry, which is a deep and vague rumour, escape them; they gather up a few sighs, a few broken groans; but even this is not immediately. Some individual voice amongst men must have already imitated that mighty voice; imitators of an imitation, reflections of a reflection, they begin to sing, and gaily improve—without caring for them in any other way—our doubts, our anguish, our ineffable unrest. Are they assailed in their own destiny by one of the arrows of Providence? Such is the force of habit, that even there, artists above all, or in spite of all, we see them dig to the bottom of their own grief to seek for poetry. Let a burst of desire or hope heave the bosom of humanity, let a universal sigh rise towards heaven or towards the religion of our forefathers, for them this is still poetry, or rather still verses; they profane, by a homage without tact or intelligence, the object of their transitory worship

their adoration insults it; they pretend to bear it aloft on a triumphal car;—draw near, that car proves a mere hurdle.

At certain epochs poetry is more generally human, and by that so much the greater. At other periods it becomes more especially social; that is, it attaches itself pre-eminently to man, such as he has been made by society. Thus it is that it diminishes man by turning away his eyes from the depths of his being and the greatness of his future. In becoming more social it becomes less human.

We have lived long enough to bury *humanitarian* poetry out of sight; *human* poetry will survive us, though it be much more ancient than the other.

The events or the individualities that have, if we may so speak, exhaled most poetry, seen and observed near at hand, appear to contain none; their poetry resembles a perfume or an echo which only becomes perceptible at a certain distance, either of space or thought. Thus the industrial movement of our era will have its poetry in the future; it has it already in the mind of the cotemporary who can contemplate it from the heights of that future; but when quite close to the movement, in the midst of its bewildering details and tumult, there is for the immense majority of spectators no poetry to be found. It is not the persons who have had the sentiment of being poetical, or those who aspired to be so, that have given out the most poetry: it was rather positive and elevated minds; strong and tender souls,

devoted to action, living an earnest, an unselfish life ; and if you come quite close, everything in them will seem to you mere prose. Nevertheless we must know how to read and understand this prose when we want to rise to the poetry of a fact or a person ; otherwise we shall be vague and characterless, that is to say, we shall not be poets.

Lovers of the poetical, do not foster your doubts as though they were poetry. Do not either imagine that doubt is a simple misfortune ; it is something else : taken in its principle it is sin ; speculative doubt is born of the debility of moral life, and in its reaction thereon it only depends on yourselves to discover negatively the confirmation of that profound sentence of the Master,—“ If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.” *Will*, and you shall believe. Believe, and you shall will. This is the double hinge on which turns the door of the narrow way.

Doubt may have its poetry—nay, it is even the whole poetry of certain minds, on which we see it grow and blossom as upon a building in ruins ; and to say the truth, what else indeed is the whole of poetry but a mantle of verdure overspreading broken walls, which, upright and entire, had not afforded space for one blade of grass ? Nevertheless it is only under certain conditions that doubt can be poetical ; these conditions are found in Byron, and both the heart and imagination are touched alike

in watching him describe the ever-narrowing circles of the fearful whirlpool.

Poetry lives on faith, on some faith or other; and when faith is wanting, it at least aspires thereto. But it cannot rock itself in uncertainty without falling soon asleep.

Some poets, more particularly among our lyrists, have, it would seem, made it their task to introduce scepticism into language as into opinions. In their writings a given word signifies more or less, or this or that, according to the fancy of the writer and the exigencies of the metre. No more definite signification, no exclusive application; all outlines effaced, all limits lost; and in this vagueness a false show of precision, and the affectation of a design clear even to hardness; tones at once shrill and confused; fractures multiplied in the verses under the name of articulations;—in short, as much as you will of *system*, but very little true art; a puerile severity regarding indifferent forms, negligence as to the substance of things and the composition as a whole.

Too much has been concluded from the success of certain sceptical or indifferent writers. Doubt is a *state* of the soul, a human and veritable fact, of which the expression is interesting under certain conditions, and it has been given to some clever indifferentists to intellectually identify themselves with the true. As a general rule, you must start from truth to have any permanent life. Literature, which has man itself for object, can no more dispense with human truth

than can morality or politics ; literature can no more exist without a moral conviction, a faith, than can the life of which it is the impress ; outside of these conditions it has neither development nor progress to look for.

II.—THE POET.

1. *The Poet.*

There are admirable poetical talents, each of which has its own special potency, but there are very few complete poets ; the disorganisation of ideas and of society does not allow of such. There cannot be poetry without society, nor any true and living society without a common faith.

A society without a moral symbolism is but a fiction of society. War is as favourable to poetry as peace ; civil dissensions do not kill it, but it dies in a vacuum, and for it the vacuum is incredulity. The despairing or haughty scepticism of the times that preceded our period, might indeed inspire lays that the human soul did not disavow ; but when scepticism becomes resigned, when out of all its anguish it only makes a pillow for its drowsy head, when society is impaired in its noblest parts, faith and love, poetry may in vain struggle in a few sons of genius, it must needs surrender itself to the slumber of Epimenides. And when will Epimenides rise from his dream ? When the rays from on high shall strike on his closed eyelids. The awaking of society will be the waking of poetry.

True poets are those who have received from God, together with the gift of expression, the power of penetrating further than others into the things of the heart and the life.

It suffices the poetic soul to be superficially touched, slightly warned, to lead it to penetrate the secrets of a life that it does not live; it allows itself to be traversed by sentiments that it does not dream of retaining; a living lyre, it only lives enough to echo, and all that it has of life it pours out, and spends in song: the inspiring tripod which the poet ascends, at once unites him to, and separates him from, society. He better understands, and seems to feel better, than one who lives more; he can tell you what passes within you more fully than you yourself; he is more and less than a man; and almost appears to us as a victim without devotion, illuminating us by the flames in which his being passes away.

Poets are candid. They tell us not under an abstract, but an individual form, in which reality breathes, what humanity thinks in the most secret recesses of its mind.

The poet needs to admire; he is in a merely human sense the high priest of the true, the beautiful, the grand. On whatever side he spreads his wings it is his mission to bear the universal homage to these worthy objects, or to some ideas of them.

The poet who, after a laborious and mighty creation, beholds the fictitious being his genius has produced,

resembles the woman in the Gospel who "remembers no more her anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." The analyst devoted to dissection cannot claim to produce a living and palpitating being at the close of his cruel operation.

Lyres are placid in the hands of poets; but the true lyre is the poet himself. It has even been doubted whether he was anything else but a lyre; yet in truth, harmonious though it be, this were saying too little; but we are all lyres in different degrees; and the one that the poet holds, if indeed he does hold one, is we ourselves.

Every real existence is the bearer of an idea, the form given to that idea. No idea is completely realised in life. What does the poet? He seizes upon the unfinished lines, prolongs them in every direction until their last term, adds nothing besides, invents nothing arbitrarily, but only succeeds in disengaging the statue from the rude block in which some portion of it was still involved.

If we neither are poets nor wish to be, can we possibly comprehend the whole of life? nay, to say the whole truth, can we be quite human? Is it not essential that the *good man* (we are using here the language of Pascal) should be a poet up to a certain point, and in some manner or other?

Great poets are sublime children, by which we do not mean that they are deficient in earnestness, since after all the child is more earnest than the grown man.

A system, even though it have been conceived and constructed by one single man, belongs in a sense to the whole world ; for it is a work of logic, and logic has no individuality ; but the kind of system that is called a *poem* belongs and can belong to one person only. It is there that individuality must triumph ; on it alone depends the unity of the work ; the more strongly individual, the more decided the internal unity which forms, in a literary point of view, its truth. Everything which is collected from without, which has not been attracted from within by a sort of moral magnetism, and re-united, summed up, by that living force ; everything which, instead of growing like a plant, has been constructed like a building, cannot, poetically speaking, have any truth ; and, on the other side (marvellous and convincing proof of human personality), elements that the reason did not combine, and whose union lacks objective truth, obtain a kind of unity and verity in the soul of the poet, which binds one to the other by unknown bonds.

Poetry will never live on pure ideas and generalities : special or lyrical, it matters not ; the reader will always seek for an individual in order to find himself there. When once this truth is overlooked there may perhaps be verses still ; there will be no more poetry.

2. The Poet and the Man.

Through want of perception or of reflection people like to believe that there is a solidarity between the poet and the man. It is an illusion which finds favour, but it is an illusion. In the majority of men poetry is at once better and less than a talent; it is an internal life. An existence without poetry is a light without a halo; none are destitute of this crown without being naturally defective. It is better than a talent, for it is a life; it is less than a talent, for it does not realise itself, and lacks the faculty of creation. But among the chosen band called poets, poetry is a talent. In some of them, indeed, it is nothing else; they have no more poetic life of their own than many a one who has never made a verse.

The poet sometimes encloses the man as the pulp does the kernel, the pellicle the seed. In others poetry does not affect the rest of existence; they produce it just as one takes an excursion to the country on Sundays or in the evening. This way of being a poet is not inferior to the other; perhaps, indeed, the greatest belong to this category.

Impartiality is the attribute of high poetry; and certainly nothing is grander than the independence and serenity of judgment of a soul where, at the same time, all human affections are keenly felt; this is the double condition of poetry, which has for its vocation to feel all and to judge of all. It has not been suffi-

ciently remarked how difficult and how beautiful this combination is, but all the world may have ascertained (for there is no lack of examples) that the poet is in the man, and is not the whole of the man ; that the man does not always value on his own account the problem that the poet has conquered; that the man often remains at the mountain's foot, whence he can only see a grey and stormy sky, and lets the poet climb alone to heights, whence the eye looking upwards everywhere meets an unsullied azure ;—in a word, that in the same individual the poet is impartial when the man is not. Decidedly the poet is always the man's best ; the poet is at moments, and in a quite contemplative sphere, a sort of regenerated man : he is at least his image ; and the true new man, created a second time by the breath of the Spirit of God, may in its turn be the image of the poet. For he too, like the poet, is the real man raised to the level of the pure idea ; but of an idea which becomes in its turn a reality, a fact ; of an idea which engenders a life and renews the whole man. Sublime, adorable poetry, which at once surpasses and accomplishes all poetry !—true *creation*, according to the real meaning of the word *poetry*, but creation of a whole man, who is at the same time thought, love, action, and of a man who thinks, loves, and acts after the manner of God.

3. *Method of the Poet.*

The method of the poet is a rapid, instantaneous synthesis, a true vision; and but for this his conception would not be compact, nor his characters life-like.

It is not by means of complete enumerations, by dissections more and more minute,—in a word, by way of analysis, that poets attain to the individuality of their object, the ultimate aim of all description. Their method is broader and more synthetical; they do not define, they point out, they put us on the way; they are careful not to indulge too much in detail, knowing that in proportion as we descend to elementary parts we reach that which is less brightly coloured and less living: and it is certainly noticeable that the most intimate characteristics, the most delicate shades, do not cost the great masters a profusion of details and an extreme subdivision of the subject; but that a rapid pencil-stroke, a passing word, awakes all the impressions they intended to produce, but which they would not have ventured to enlist one by one in their cause, nor to excite by the efforts of analysis.

Poetry in general does not define objects; it shows them, gives them a form. What we ask from a poet is not the idea of an object, it is that object itself, concrete, complex, living.

The secret lies not in saying much, but in exciting much thought. The pleasure that poetry gives is

that of imagining more than is written; the task is divided between the poet and his reader.

A certain disorder, or the sacrifice of some of the indispensable conditions of human life, is not, as some suppose, one of the necessary elements of poetry.

Every description is a limitation, and all limitations are repugnant to enthusiasm; the ineffable alone is great, because we feel that what is really great ought to be ineffable; and wherever the finite does not distinctly show us its bounds we think we see the infinite. True poets know this, and in every department they express, they indicate, rather than describe; they open the angle, and do not prolong its sides; they begin a curve that our imagination completes; they light up a corner of the picture, and lead us to dream the scene they have not chosen to unroll before us.

We must not suppose that the poet always goes from the idea to the fact, or, in other words, seeks in nature or in life for a fact, an illustration, for his idea; very often (and this is perhaps best) the fact unexpectedly met with, and seized by the genius of the fabulist, suggests the idea. Thus nature becomes for him what it is in fact, and perhaps intentionally, an immense apologue, a parable which breaks up into a thousand parables. No one knows, unless he has experienced it, the delight which is felt by those minds born for fiction, for whom everything in nature becomes personal and human, for whom the most commonplace incidents transform them-

selves into little epics. The fabulising genius is as natural and as imperious as any other. •

Whatever may be thought of a poet's right and obligation to be always himself, he is not less obliged to accommodate himself to others, than others to him. Their encounter takes place only in a debatable land, which is neither his nor theirs exclusively. It is even an essential part of poetic talent to place itself more or less in the standpoint of the world at large; with a superiority peculiarly its own, to understand and speak the universal language, not to wait for other minds in a proud solitude where only its peers will ever come to seek it out; in a word, to be at the same time by the exquisiteness of the form the man of the minority, and by the truth the man of the whole world.

No doubt, in a sense, poetry can say all, and indeed it alone does this, it alone achieves the expression of the human soul; but it does not tell us in the same way as prose; it *tells* less than it expresses: its aim is not so much to transmit us a *fac-simile* of objects as to extract their idea, to render their impression, to translate them to the soul. It is at this height that it remains poetry; lower down it turns to prose; and if then you insist upon its preserving the external forms that are peculiar to poetry, there is a painful contrast between the essence of the object and its form; it is but disguised and ill-disguised prose; the vibration of the rhyme and the pomp of the images only enhance the incurably prosaic

nature of the substance. It is here that we see revealed one of those intimate connections, those secret affinities of art, which reflect life, together with the morality that ought to rule it. Both have received the same lesson, or rather morality has counselled art, and art has served morality. And why, indeed, should not these two objects, too widely separated in their developments, have originally had a common starting-point? Why should we not admit that before breaking off they flowed in the same channel, followed the same course, and that they have been, under different aspects, and with different means at their disposal, the *pursuit of the best* in everything? In our opinion, it is morality which, in the first instance, has interdicted to art the reproduction in detail, and in the most absolutely concrete form, of whatever is hideous in the manifestations of moral evil; it is morality which would have condemned at all times, and condemns to-day, this enormous accumulation of nameless horrors.

Would you keep the treasure of natural affection pure and entire, the energy of your conscience intact? Would you avoid changing the gold of truth for some arbitrary equivalent? Would you, in a word, live a real, a manly life? Then beware, not of poetry, but of the trade of poet. Not always, indeed, but too often, this either empties out a man, or requires one emptied out already. Too strong, too intimate a moral life may often prove an obstacle to

poetic creation. Vividly to comprehend all human sentiments without feeling them deeply, this is the condition under which several of the greatest poets have been formed,—*greatest men* we might have called them, had they been *men*. They were careful not to be so: a sublime indifference seemed to make part of their genius; and, cursed as was the prophetess of Troy, though in another manner, they prophesied for the whole world, with the exception of themselves. One might say that they had been sent on earth to say and not to be, to see and not to live. When, truly inspired, they flung to the multitude some striking idea like this,—“I am a man; nothing human can be indifferent to me,”—no more of this grand thought remained within their own nature than if, by expressing it for others, they had deprived themselves of its possession.

Prophetic inspiration alone can dispense with study. Rhetoric is not needed when there are miracles for arguments; but when one has nothing wherewith to influence human nature but that nature itself, we needs must reckon with, we must observe, study, follow it: this is the principle of all art, the secret of all eloquence, and the religious orator can as little as any other dispense with the knowledge of this principle and the possession of this secret.

The richest language has not got expression for all our shades of feeling; there are things that poetry cannot say, at least directly; and the art of the poet very often lies in saying one thing that implies

another that he cannot say. Great poets do not pique themselves upon describing all impressions, but they aim at exciting them, and it is their triumph to develop in the soul of their reader a whole world of feelings which are not even named in their works.

In poetry those who find are not they who seek.

Poetry is an activity of the intellect. When it does nothing but move the feelings, it mistakes the means for the end. Sensation ought to be considered the medium of the idea. Poetry does not, it is true, neglect the sensible impression, but it traverses it to reach higher. It must needs enlarge the horizon of thought, it must needs procure for us the noble pleasure of contemplation.

III.—POETRY, ART, AND SCIENCE.

Philosophy, Eloquence, Music, History.

Without philosophy there can be no true poetry: without it pretty verses may, indeed, be made; but in order to be really a poet it is essential to be also, up to a certain point, a philosopher.

Every great poet is a philosopher by instinct and inspiration, every great philosopher is a poet. There can be no high philosophy without imagination. Observation and induction, which have been called the two crutches of science, can make no advance if they be not impelled by the vital power of imagination.

More ideas will spring from one single fable than

fables from twenty ideas, and the lesson most vividly taught by a narrative was rarely distinctly present to the mind of the narrator. Great works, immortal inventions, are not conceivable *à priori*; in the idea which gave them birth there was something at once more immediate and more complex. The theme of every poetical composition is an intimate combination of elements, of which the junction, although accidental in appearance, was a kind of vision for the mind that produced it. Were it otherwise, one does not see in what the poetical genius would essentially differ from the philosophical. And here we may remark, in passing, that this is why what is called the idea of a work of imagination is difficult to disengage from that work. The fact is it never appears purely abstract and alone. The immediate object of poetry is always a compound; and a unity of thought, at once more rigorous and more visible, could only be had at the cost of poetry itself. To say this is in no way to depreciate the poet or to deny his art; it is rather to concede to poetry the power of creating living beings; for life is a complex fact, the simultaneous concurrence of several elements that analysis will be able to distinguish by-and-bye.

In these latter times have been born two enemies to Poetry, against which she should guard all the more that they give themselves out as allies,—we mean *idealism*, which perverts and distorts, and *pantheism*, which corrupts her.

Poetry is to thought what the body is to the soul.

The method of the poet is not that of the philosopher, but no one is either poet or philosopher except by thought.

There is no high poetry but that which feeds thought; poetry is philosophy in a concrete condition.

All arts, and philosophy as well, demand a noble impartiality of thought; all aspire towards the pure ideal: and eloquence itself is only an apparent exception; the orator only becomes great in rising towards vaster principles, more universal interests, than his momentary pursuit; it is from the heights of the ideal that he must dominate the real. But this doctrine does not go so far as to declare that, in order to be pure, art must absorb itself in the thought of art. How should it possibly gain anything by denying its origin? Does it not exist as means before it is put forth as an end? Has an idea been first looked out for the sake of expression, or expression for that of idea? What, then, in the eyes of human consciousness, is art separated from its object, or making that object merely its opportunity? So much is certain that, placed upon this basis, art withers as art, and that the exclusive pursuit of form ruins that very form. Literary teaching, obliged to treat of the form apart, to concentrate attention for years upon words and phrases; the more noisy triumph of literary success; the more palpable charm of works in which devotion to form neces-

sarily occupies much space ; all these, applied, as it would seem, to the advantage of art, have often, for their only effect, to reduce and impoverish it. Strong thought, substantial knowledge, are the first conditions of art, and, as has been very well said, it is only solid materials that are susceptible of a fine polish. Consequently we need not wonder that science, aided by literary culture, though retaining its own supremacy over it, should have occasionally given us excellent writers. Scientific precision can hardly fail to communicate itself to language, since the true "*savant*" is the one who bestows the most appropriate names, and science itself is a better nomenclature of natural facts. Order is seldom wanting in the style of a man who derives his strength and owes all his discoveries to order. Moreover, there reigns in that physical world,—in a special sense, a world of order and of God, with which, fortunately, the observer need not mix himself up in any way,—there reigns a majestic peace easily tinging the style, which, in other departments, is the man himself—in this, the world itself. The dignity of life, much more common among men of science than of literature, because their passions are not the material of their productions, quite naturally becomes dignity of language ; and the sublimity inherent in the great natural features of nature, and great scientific views, when reflected in a feeling soul, gives birth to an earnest eloquence.

A man that inspiration visits unexpectedly, re-

ceives thence a kind of surprise which is sometimes more favourable to art than a premeditated intention, and, above all, an exclusive intention of producing beautiful forms. Thus several men of scientific genius have left models of eloquence without intending it; form came to them without their seeking it; and beauty, attracted by truth, followed after it into the writings of those who only aimed at instructing. We may find ingenious developments of this idea in an article of M. Topffer on the travels of De Saussure (*Bib. Univ. de Genève*, Sept., 1834). May we not hence infer that the poet would have much to gain in the matter of his art from earnest relations with science? and might not the words of Fontenelle be aptly quoted here and generalised?—“Although eloquence and poetry be the principal talents that the French Academy requires, it also admits erudition (add, *science*), which is not barbarous; perhaps nothing is wanting but to display somewhat more the use made, and even the want felt, of it.”

There are but few instances of real abilities of which erudition has robbed poetry. When poetry is a vocation, it is apparently very difficult not to remain faithful to it.

Poetry no more dispenses with force than eloquence excludes beauty. We must seek elsewhere the difference between these branches. It lies in this, that eloquence has facts for object, and poetry ideas; I mean eloquence as such and poetry as such, for these

two arts sometimes border on, and more or less blend with, each other.

Eloquence aims at bringing about changes in the actual world; poetry is satisfied with producing them in the representations of the mind alone. Eloquence does not ignore ideas; poetry makes no abstraction of facts: but the former proceeds from ideas to facts, the latter from facts to ideas; that is to say, eloquence transforms ideas into facts, and poetry facts into ideas. Eloquence must needs find its fulcrum in ideas (ideas of justice, honesty, propriety), but like a lever, it avails itself of this fulcrum to move facts; and in the same manner poetry must needs take facts for its fulcrum (take *reality*, experience); but this is in order to raise itself with them towards ideas, or towards an ideal. Let us, however, observe that the word *idea* does not mean the same thing in both cases: in the former it represents laws, laws of nature, of reason, and of conscience; in the second, ideas are but purer or more complete types of all existences whatever than can be presented, either by any one real and concrete existence taken separately, or by all such together. Eloquence, then, leads us to action, poetry to contemplation. Eloquence is a conflict, poetry a spectacle or a vision. Eloquence speaks of what is, poetry creates what ought to be. Eloquence flows in the same channel as life; poetry makes for itself a channel that runs parallel with life. Eloquence mingles, as it were, with life's stream, swelling and hurrying it onward;

poetry suspends its course: I am not speaking here, be it understood, of inner or contemplative life, but of external and practical. The two streams are not always separated; they may, from time to time, reunite and flow in one: poetry may become eloquent, eloquence may become poetical; but for all that, eloquence and poetry are none the less distinct in their principle, their order, and consequently in the means they employ: and this is so true, that eloquence, which is an action, if it ceases acting in order to contemplate, is no longer eloquent; and poetry, if it forgets contemplation for action, ceases to be poetry.

The rule for each is to avoid falsifying itself, to remain faithful to its principle, constantly to maintain it, and to make reciprocal use of each other without allowing mutual absorption.

What used to be most lauded as poetry in our authors was usually eloquence. The cleverest critics have been liable to make this mistake; and—singular, but easily proved fact—it is perhaps among our prose writers that we must seek out some of our greatest poets.

Poetry, which raises itself above music by the admission of the logical element, sometimes reverts towards music to borrow thence not merely melody of sound, cadence, rhythm, but even something of the nature of musical language, which, if it does not say all that speech can, says in return much that speech can never express. There is a musical cha-

racter in certain verses, perhaps in certain lines of prose, where the ties of logic, being somewhat relaxed, allow thought to float more freely, to occupy in the soul a larger amount of space, and to flow into crevices into which a more precise form would have forbidden its entrance. It is music in words; and the least harmonious words may contain it, for it is the spirit and not the form of music that has thus entered into poetry.

Art that creates, history that judges, do not come under the same conditions. Poetry is accountable for its inventions only to human nature. She has not got to detach herself from affection, whence she is born, on which she lives; she does not ask the poet, in order to follow her, to leave behind him a portion of his being; she carries the whole man along with her. What she gives to her fictions is the imprint of the whole real, concrete man; hers are fictions which, rightly speaking, are none,—which are truer than history, for history is always the judgment of an individual mind applied to facts that overflow its limits; and in poetry the poet has, as it were, only to measure himself with himself. There is no re-writing the “*Iliad*,” but there is no historical masterpiece which does not require to be re-written; each of these is only perfect, only irrevocable, as a poem, so that the same character makes it at once a transitory work and an immortal.

CHAPTER III.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF POETRY.

I.—DRAMATIC POETRY.

1. *Drama and Poetry—French Tragedy—Corneille and Racine.*

THE drama is only a technical and special name for life. Every life is a drama, for every life is an exchange of thoughts and feelings between two persons, or between two beings in the same person. Where this interchange is wanting there is no life and no poetry. *Amant alterna camœnæ.*

The drama, whatever the subject, is a conflict of rival forces, each furnished with more or less important auxiliaries: two armies which muster simultaneously take the field; there is an encounter, an engagement; varying successes; an attack, as definite as vehement; prolonged suspense; and for *dénouement*, the defeat of one party, the victory of the other. The drama is an action which, born under our eyes from very distinct elements, goes on complicating itself, widening its plot, deepening its difficulties, embracing more interests, associating us by at least a speculative sympathy with all its vicissitudes, and hurrying us on breathlessly towards

a fatal term, where we repose at length, but generally in tears or in a painful train of thought. The drama is composed of many dramas, each of which has for its stage the heart of one of the characters divided within himself, and asking back its lost unity either from virtue or from crime.

All that is grand, all that is beautiful, is poetical, but is not necessarily dramatic; we must not confound the genus and the species. It is true that the dramatic element completes the narrative, as narrations complete lyrical poetry, which latter is poetry in its, not perhaps primitive, but elementary state; it is poetry in its purest, most abstract notion; it is, one might say, the essence of poetry. But just as the soul which inhales and exhales it involuntarily seeks to unite itself with all forms of life, so lyrical poetry aspires to narrative, and narration to the drama. The drama in poetry, or, if you will, the dramatic portion of every poetical work, triumphantly asserts the unison of two worlds, of the external world with the world of the soul, and displays the most complete harmony of poetry with reality. It is life entering no more at the side door, but by the front entrance into the sanctuary, where all things come to utter their last word, and to reveal their most intimate secret. After the drama there is nothing left.

The ancients did not know love. What we call by that name has, no doubt, its origin in nature, but develops by civilisation. Accordingly, this sentiment does not exist in ancient tragedy, which turns entirely

upon the affections of parent, husband, or child; and in this respect Voltaire rediscovered the forsaken vein.

The practical and little contemplative genius of the French has prevented them from making the speculative element prominent in their tragedies. For I shall not certainly give the name of contemplation, or of satisfaction of the speculative element, to that mania for preaching which got possession of Voltaire and his disciples during the last century.

The Frenchman, a practical man, a man of appliances and results, even in the sphere of the fine arts, has declared that tragedy is an instrument, a machine, intended to produce movements of terror or pity in the soul, a definition which, if it goes no further, seems to me unworthy of tragedy. But the French temperament, far more oratorical than poetical, tends to action, and hardly takes cognisance of contemplation. To tickle and to irritate the feelings is, generally speaking, the aim of French tragedians, and this gives to their works a character of immobility which other nations have been better able to avoid. There is in tragedy a speculative element which they have known how to seize and appreciate, and which connects itself with the highest faculties of the soul. Tragedy should not proclaim a thesis, but realise an idea; and this is one of its principal interests, not only for philosophers by profession, but for every earnest-minded man.

French tragedians are the most eloquent, have the

most taste, but are the least poetical. Pure poetry abounds more on the stage of other nations. The characters of the English drama do not speak as they ought; they spoil their part by an insupportable medley of cynicism, of grotesqueness, and absurdity; but the gift of the ideal and fertility of creation are the portion of the English.

The strength of passion was the ideal of Racine; the strength of will that of Corneille. The former was more true and less sublime, more tender and less pathetic. Love mingled with heroism was the favourite subject, the very soul of his tragedies.

A man of exquisite sensibility, St. Paul, has made use of an expression as profound as simple,—“Although the more I love, the less I am loved!” Can it be true, then, that by loving more, we expose, we condemn ourselves to be less beloved; and that the trusting surrender of affection is, as it were, a signal for ingratitude? Can it be that this is one of the mysteries of the human heart and life? If so, what could be more tragical? Well, then, this forms one part of the tragedy of “Corinne.” Striking revelation! Love is a sacrifice, and not a bargain; as such love must be entertained; to love is to mount the altar, is to renounce beforehand all reciprocity; we only love when we do thus renounce it, and taste the ineffable happiness of love in all its purity only when we make love love’s sole reward; and in order that these sublime and mournful truths should take life within us, it is ordained that, according to the expression and

the experience of the apostle of the Gentiles, "the more we love, the less are we loved."

2. *Theatrical Taste—Its Cause and Effects—
A Theatrical People.*

The poetical element, in our opinion, completes the man. Poetry is not the decoration of things; it is their intimate idea, or at all events it is the pursuit of that idea which perhaps was present and palpable to man's eyes before the fall had obscured the spiritual sight. The poetical element, taken in itself and apart from its application, corresponds with the best portions of our being, and cannot therefore deteriorate in proportion as the social conditions improve; for one truth cannot contradict another.

But the theatrical taste is of another nature. It implies a want of seeing life as it is not; a want of deceiving ourselves about the inevitable proportions of objects. It is the empire of the sensuous part of our nature over the spiritual. This sensuous part has indeed its rights, but they are those of a vassal, not of a master. It ought to be at the service of the spiritual part, to work in the direction and interests of the former, and not in its own.

A theatrical people is one which carries about with it everywhere the inclinations it carries to and brings back from the theatre; a thirst for sensuous impressions, dramatic effects, scenes, representations. The reality of things may, indeed, inspire such a people with

aversion or esteem, according to its character; but these sentiments will only be intense in proportion as the popular imagination lends them intensity, and imagination is directed by the senses. Before long this people even accustoms itself to pay little heed to what does not come to it recommended by this essential accompaniment. Whatever is obscure, silent, secret, does not touch, does not even reach it. It only hears through a speaking-trumpet, only sees through a microscope, only judges an object by the pomp of its decoration. It is not capable of feeling any enthusiasm for pure reason, nor of resisting sonorous declamations, nor defending itself against the *prestige* of words. Virtue which knows not how to *attitudinise*, which gets up no scene, is not dramatic, does not *act*, leaves it tolerably cold; in morals the fine strikes it more than the good; it is no use to be just in its presence unless one is sublime, to be true if one be not striking, to be firm if not imposing; we have to do with a dulled sense of hearing, which is no longer open to moderate sounds, and only takes in screams.

Now, to succeed in the midst of a people like this, it is clear that we must blow the trumpet, must draw up the curtain and present them with a spectacle. Men who want to get on turn actors. In the pulpit, in books, newspapers, society, they are more anxious about a part to play than a line of conduct to maintain. The theatre is no longer confined to certain buildings; it is everywhere; it encroaches upon

public life. When a country is a theatre its citizens are actors.

The history of such a people is a long drama, in which stage effects are numbered complacently under the name of *days*. The patient continuity of a prosperous social development attracts the glances of a few; those of the majority let themselves be fascinated by striking and sudden changes. A few wish for what is right, more for what is useful, all for what is glorious. The most desirable successes are little valued unless they happen to be *showy* into the bargain; and pampered and fastidious Imagination covers with erasures all that she has been unable to embellish and dramatise.

It is difficult to say to what point this love of the theatrical may influence the course of public events. To do this we ought to be able to measure the force added, by skill in stage effect, not only to truth, but to error; to determine all that, in critical moments, the emotion caused by a striking and unexpected spectacle may bring about. The history of certain peoples, which does not permit us to entertain any doubt as to the reality of these electrical shocks, does not furnish us with sure data for appraising their bearing.

Now this is not my idea of a poetical national existence; this last is a more contemplative thing; it finds poetry everywhere, for, in fact, it exists everywhere. Especially is it found in the joys, the cares, and even the sadnesses of the domestic hearth; in that long, quiet, monotonous drama of

family life; in the regular return of what a modest hope ventures to look for; in the graceful, gloomy, or touching episodes that Providence introduces into the history of each of our lives; in the reverential memory of the real and practical virtues of our ancestors; in esteem rather than glory; in an intimate affection for the land of our birth, for all its children, all its interests; in the inner life of the heart, that vast and deep theatre where move in solemn twilight so many thoughts and feelings, images and realities, hopes and memories; lastly, in religion, without which all poetry is mendacious and mutilated, and which alone, by giving an imperishable value to things unseen, proportionately takes it away from all that appears and dazzles. A poetical people little needs theatrical representations, or at least for such a people the most simple are the best; it is contented with those which by a few touches consecrate and symbolise its own earnest, active, and tranquil existence.

3. *Influence of Dramatic Representations.*

I do not venture absolutely to condemn the theatre and those who frequent it; I merely permit myself the remark that a true Christian will hardly have much taste for or want of the theatre; that there is no harmony whatever between Christianity and the theatre in its actual condition; and hence I infer (always from a religious point of view) that those who have a decided love for the theatre

are under an illusion which is not without its danger. If the theatre, by the tasks it imposes on them, devotes those who serve it to immorality, and sometimes to infamy, how can it be lawful for us to encourage such an amusement ?

Looked at closely, every case of distress is prosaic ; true charity alone can idealise it. It is therefore much to be feared, as J. J. Rousseau has observed, that some disappointment should be felt in meeting in real life with unhappiness and unhappy people of a perfectly different stamp from those on the stage who inspired us with such lively interest, and this disappointment may give our sympathies a considerable chill.

What we have to declare in the first place is, that a heart frequently touched and stirred by theatrical distresses is not made the more tender by them ; and secondly, that there is a false pity, a false benevolence, too often excited by dramatic authors, which does the soul far more harm than good.

It is a bad sign to be obliged to seek our pleasures out of a natural sphere ; a well-employed life ought itself to be the source of all true pleasures. As much as possible our pleasures should be connected with our condition and linked with our duties, as is the case with domestic delights, the best of all earthly enjoyments.

Every dramatic author who understands his business ought to be more effective when acted than when read.

Reading, and not representation, is, however, the true touchstone of the merit of a dramatic work. I admit the *prestige* of the stage as a fact; but what is good only when acted is not good; what does not appear true when read is not true.

Publicity is a dazzling but false light, which is unfavourable to judgment and to candour of character.

Theatrical emotions need to be corrected by contemplation. The thrilled and excited spirit recovers and strengthens itself by this noble exercise. From this height it can see more calmly and better the accidents whose first aspect perturbed it. Terror and pity remain, but they change their character, and sometimes their object. The soul feels attracted towards higher interests. *Britannicus* and *Junia* interest the feelings, but the nobler powers of the mind irresistibly tend elsewhere. It is not even enough that the destiny of Rome hangs on the decision Nero is about to take; the whole of humanity is in that man. And if, on one hand, the mere aspect of this monstrous individuality appal us, what there is in Nero of man in general is far more appalling. As we watch the growing of the tiger's claws, we shudder at so easily understanding how they grow; we shudder at eventually finding that there is nothing in the monster but what is human, and the soul becomes filled with an earnest sadness, of which at last it is itself the object.

We must say it, for the credit of our nature, all fallen though it be, the interest that we take in any character has always for its motive the qualities we think we perceive in it; and for measure, the measure of those qualities; and hence it is that the interest of the character connects itself with the interest of some principle.

At the performance of a dramatic work, or in reading history or fiction, nothing more vividly excites our sympathy than the character of a man singly resisting by his individual conviction the error of all, or by his individual conscience the perversity of all. This sympathy is no doubt a triumph of the moral sentiment, and it is permissible to conclude that, up to a certain point, we are able to recognise and honour true morality seen from a distance. But at the same time, as these facts that touch us so keenly and so legitimately have been very often repeated, as each epoch reproduces them, we must also conclude that the love and hatred of the public have been very often misled. Let us take a step further. Is this position of outlaw that the noble character we are admiring was placed in by his contemporaries, one that he would lose amongst ourselves? As things now stand, his perfection does not threaten us, nor compromise any of our interests. What, indeed, should prevent us from admiring? our admiration costs us nothing. But transplant the same man into our midst, would he meet with less opposition on our part than on that of the men of

his own time? The question is not whether we are in a condition up to a certain point to admire and appreciate defunct virtue, but rather whether we are good judges of living virtue, and consequently if our love and our hate afford a correct estimate of the quality of persons and things.

The dignity of women is inseparable from the reserve which it becomes them to keep up. And which of us would have for our sister or our daughter the heroine of a comedy? Comedy, then, is pernicious, in that it presents us with a series of pictures adapted to enervate the heart, and dispose it to the most seductive of passions. It deceives youth, feminine youth more especially, in bringing forward as the main interest of life what only occupies a brief part of it. This falsehood influences the character too often attributed on the stage to the old age of both sexes; it tends to render age contemptible and paternity odious. Let us only add that these vices are not peculiar to the theatre, they equally belong to literature, more particularly to the novel. The novel is the stage transplanted to the home.

II.—EPIC POETRY—LYRICS.

Lyrical and Dramatic Poetry compared—Introspective Poetry—Comic Poetry—Satire.

An epic poem, in point of fact, is nothing more than the explanation of earth by heaven; it is of all styles the most essentially religious. History is

a chain that drags along the ground so long as it be not connected with its first link, the ring riveted in the Rock of Ages. It is only complete and thoroughly philosophical on these conditions. People may object to the manner in which Bossuet refers all historical events to the Divine will, but all the criticisms of Bossuet's book cannot affect the real question. Outside of this, no doubt, history, looked at in itself, may still retain a certain meaning and certain philosophy; but the epopee, which is only history idealised, loses all its value without the intervention of the Deity. This is not a mere conventionality, it is the result of profound reason. A man is not competent to write an epic merely because he wishes it. In default of a religious heart, there must at least be a religious imagination. And besides this, it is requisite that an epic be animated by some great humanitarian fact. But in such a work as this—and it is here that we trace the limits of individuality—a man requires to be sustained by a whole people, by a whole world.

Epics are veritable human Bibles. Their commemoration of a great event serves to consecrate a great truth. The human race seeks the conclusion of each of its historical vicissitudes in an idea.

Self-knowledge is the necessary fulcrum of all regeneration, yet perhaps this great work is hampered by a too minute self-observation. This latter turns into study, into curiosity, those great impressions that incline the soul on the side of the light.

It furtively transforms the anguish of repentance into the joy of self-love, and the reproaches of the conscience into the discoveries of the mind. This is not a re-entering into self, but rather coming out of it. As amused spectators of a serious evil, we cease to be identified with it, we estrange, distract ourselves from it, while apparently occupying ourselves with it. This study may, indeed, by a counter-stroke be profitable to other men; it generally does harm to the one who gives himself up to it. It is better in the first instance to see only the great features of our nature, to know only the great words of the moral language, to follow with respect to ourselves the Gospel method, which, taking hold at one grasp of all small sins, turns them at once into one great sin, and thus places us not in presence of ourselves, but of God. Later, no doubt—I mean after the restoration of the soul—the sheaf gets unbound, and lets us see one by one all the stalks of tares; the Christian eye, which discerns great things from very far off, observes very exactly the least things at hand. The primary idea of Christianity is a sure and delicate instrument, which penetrates, like the Gospel word, to the ultimate division of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow; and it is to Christianity even that we owe that subtle psychology which unfortunately does not always return to its source. Certain productions that Christianity disavows—*René*, *Werther*, *Obermann*—perhaps could never have seen the day but for Christianity. Where the light of the Gospel does

not penetrate, it at least throws strange reflections ; if it does not illuminate, it at least disabuses. Where it does not carry joy, it carries disenchantment : a subtle melancholy, a hollow and craving mysticism, is the reaction of Christianity in all deep and delicate souls that have not become Christian. In entering the world Christianity has caused a great void in all spirits that it has not filled ; it has rendered the fantastic creations with which they had been wont to people themselves thenceforth impossible ; there is no longer any place in the world except for Christianity or nothingness. Unwillingly every one feels or experiences this, and hence those torments formerly unknown ; hence those enervating reveries of dispossessed souls ; hence that poetry which feeds upon itself, and which, in default of a full immensity, takes possession of a desert immensity, an immensity of grief ; other infinite for a being of whom the infinite is the true portion, the eternal want, the incorruptible symbol !

Lyricism is less a style than a poetical element ; at least, it is an element before it is a style. It is poetry itself in the greatest possible purity of its being. It is that mysterious emotion which attaches itself to everything, and also springs from everything, because its source is rather in us than in things. Separate from every kind of poetry that which characterises and gives it its name, from the drama the dramatic, from the epic personages and facts, from the didactic poem its teaching, what will remain ?

Nothing, do you suppose? Nothing but the soul of the poet, a soul full of poetry, which will take itself for subject if you deprive it of all else. But, however excellent it be for itself, it serves only as a makeshift, and always, like a swallow above an abyss, you see it flying from side to side seeking some place to settle. Hence all the different styles that poetry numbers; hence the lyrical style itself, which we must not confound with lyricism, of which it is one application. For, after all, lyrical poetry too has subjects, sometimes epical, sometimes dramatic, sometimes philosophical; but what nevertheless prevents it from being either a drama, an epic, or a philosophical poem, is that it only borrows from all these different themes just what it requires to justify the emotions it expresses. The proper subject of lyrical poetry is the impression that the poet receives from those various objects. It is, so to speak, their echo in the poet's soul, the sound that they render in his ears, the colour they assume in the depths of his being.

If we reflect upon it a little, we shall find that the two styles, the two elements, lyrical and dramatic, although separate and distinct, are not so far removed, not so opposed to each other, as a first glance might lead us to suppose. Lyrical poetry is subjective, I admit; it is the *me*, and the *me* only, striking upon the lyre; the poet, concentrated in himself, appears as if he never issued thence. But, be it observed, it is not his deepest, his most personal

self which is the subject of his songs; it is, if we may so say, an ideal self, which is at once within and without the poet, a purified personality, at a distance from passion, and safe from its immediate shocks. Never was passion properly so called lyrical. Poetry lives on emotions apart from perturbation. It feeds on the purest substance of the sentiments of the soul. It quenches its thirst with a nectar that has no dregs. The lyrical poet is a *me* listening to the personal *me*, and, like a pure echo, ennobling the sounds it repeats. What lyrical songs express is less the immediate and concrete reality of our impressions than their ideal. There is consequently in lyrical poetry a germ, an outline of the drama. There is a transformation, a translation; the poet bends his voice to the man; the *me* interprets the *me* in the same way that the dramatic poet, after having experienced them, transmits to us the emotions and thoughts of some personage who is positively a stranger to him.

That which is pre-eminently *internal* is that last depth of the soul into which scarcely any one descends; where we live without feeling that we live there; where, unknown to us, our leading thoughts are engendered, and which constitute whatever worth we may have. Obscure stage, even for ourselves, of the greatest events of our life! Primary source of those facts that we believe to be primary, and which are but secondary! Profound life, which is hardly reached by that pseudo-intimate poetry which is within the compass of the most superficial, and suits the

taste of the most frivolous, but into which the Divine ray strikes directly when the fiat of the second creation is pronounced over us, and whence, at all stages of our life, the true and pure light breaks forth! This abyss, lined with pearls of great price, repulses like a too dense flood the too light diver; and in our days only a few spirits have touched at times those gloomy depths, and have brought back a few pearls thence. Others have returned empty-handed, the hair of their flesh standing up, having beheld down there some vague shape of God, the sight of which upset all their notions, and menaced their security. The fact is, that there lies the real point of contact between the finite and the infinite, between the soul and God; there is found all that is earnest in life, the ultimate essence of human personality, the veritable *self*; there consequently, and not in I know not what slender and subtle psychology, exist those intimate thoughts, intimate poetry, the name of which is so lavishly scattered in our day. The primitive and the secret have points of meeting without being essentially the same thing; in an era like ours, the really intimate hardly opens out except to the gaze of a troubled conscience; perhaps it is only our moral anguish that paves the way to those depths; perhaps there is nothing really intimate except the thoughts of repentance; and God only renders Himself in the first instance perceptible to the meditations of remorse.

To substitute for the hatred that each deserves, the

ridicule that folly excites, is to tend to make sin appear a mere eccentricity of the mind; it is to pervert or turn aside the impression that the conscience ought to receive from it; it is to oblige the vicious man, rather to change his mask than his character. Ridicule is not an unlawful weapon in all cases, but it is a dangerous one; it may sometimes be well to make vice blush, but ridicule soon becomes a vice itself in its turn; the sinner may sometimes be led by shame to remorse, but how many souls there are which stop short at the shame, and whose self-love alone suffers and weeps! The ridicule of *comedy*, the best in every sense, because it is but the simple representation of a true character in probable circumstances, and is less scornful than any other, is for all that not without its dangers. This game is a hazardous one, not only to play, but to watch. It seems to us at least that it is more applicable to the absurdities of the mind than the vices of the heart,—a real distinction, though there is hardly any absurdity without sin, nor any sin that does not lead to an absurdity.

Comedy, which is nothing more than an ingenuous revelation of a character by itself, when it is good, never wearies.

Plenty of people are quite able to judge evil to be evil, and yet they only laugh at it. This is how all atheists begin, and the peculiarity, alas! of the most excellent comic writers.

The pleasure that even first-rate satire gives is

in general of an inferior nature to that afforded by comedy. In this last there is something more than amusement, something higher even than that legitimate but dangerous satisfaction that the sight of a necessary and merited punishment bestows. The pleasure of comedy, or, to restrict myself to the exact truth, the pleasure that the comic properly so called gives, is a poetical and intellectual pleasure, nay, I will even say a philosophical one.

Raillery is nothing but the wrong side of earnestness.

III.—RELIGIOUS POETRY.

1. *Poetry—Religion—Christianity.*

I do not know whether there exists a *Christian art*, but what is called by this name is, generally speaking, very little Christian. There is very little Christianity in the majority of paintings of pious subjects; the most excellent in this respect are, at all events, not the most celebrated. Christian art triumphs rather in the expression than in the form, because it is appreciated rather by the soul than the eyes; and a painting is only Christian when its aspect impresses us like a fresh reading of the Gospel.

Religion has distinctly separated her cause from that of arts, in order not to give a worldly charm to her lessons. She has not, indeed, affected the direct contrary; Truth affects nothing; but she has not deigned

to flatter a too common weakness ; to ensnare minds by false pretences, and to distract from the true by the beautiful. She has chosen means, forms, a language, where the true appears (not, indeed, exactly alone, since in a certain sense the true implies the beautiful), but where the beautiful appears only as a consequence of the true. She could not avoid being sublime, but she permitted herself nothing further, and had so little regard to literary requirements, that we are often led to think she intentionally defied them. Taken up with the substance, she did not choose to occupy herself with the form beyond what the substance imperatively demanded ; and she seems to have said, like St. Paul, " I take no thought for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof ; I keep under my body, and have it in subjection."

There is most certainly a relation between poetry and faith : poetry as well as love lives on faith and truth ; not that she escapes doubt or denies mystery, but she has faith in something in man and outside of man ; she lives and expresses life ; she may know despair, she does not know *ennui*, does not separate herself from all existences, abjure all sympathies, to bury herself in the void of a vain egotism. For the honour of human nature be it said, egotism is so little poetical that all poetry loses itself therein. Poetry is not conceivable without sympathy, and without a lively and continual communication from the inner to the outer. *Ideas* alone will not suffice it ; like love, like the soul, it requires *beings*, realities,

history, a complete world. Every other medium is for it a vacuum in which it must needs expire.

It is impossible but that supreme truth, coming forth out of itself to put on human speech, should become a poetry, and the purest and most perfect as the most living poetry ; it is, in fact, at this altitude that the idea and the life, the reality and the image, embrace and blend.

Although art may identify the artist with all that he does not experience, and that it be even the ambition, the peculiar object and the nature of art to do so, yet few artists, especially in our own epoch, have sufficiently studied, sufficiently contemplated Christian truth to be able to associate themselves in imagination with the principal situations to which it gives rise ; they generally better express what tends towards than what springs from that truth, and nothing in them is so Christian as the nameless want they feel of being so. Almost always, if they treat religion as an instrument, they play upon it ill ; if as a language, they speak it ill ; their accent betrays them. I prefer their Christianity when they are Christians without intending it. Their doubts very often contain more religion than their faith. In this department, objective truth or dogmatic exactness, were it even complete, is of much less value than subjective truth, even with greatest imperfection in idea or knowledge. Nothing at first sight in M. Hugo's poetry is more positively Christian than his *prayer for all* ; but how inferior it really is

in this particular to other pieces in which he never thought of being Christian!

Poetry has this in common with religion, that it blends and unites with all things, as sound with motion, as the echo with the voice.

Religion is no more than man himself, dependent, as Pascal says, "on space and duration." The ideas of infinitude, immensity, eternity, power, essential, no doubt, to religion, are nevertheless not religion; all these may superabound in the language of a poet, and yet earnestness be entirely wanting there. These elements may constitute metaphysics, and even poetry; but neither these metaphysics nor this poetry will be religious. Even greatness will be absent from them, for the greatness of God is to be holy, and the greatness of man is to aspire to being so; and until he be holy, his greatness lies in feeling that he is not. A religious thought, then, is first of all a thought of compunction and repentance; a religious poem is a poem founded and resting throughout on these ideas; but nowhere else can it derive any interest or any unction; without these ideas it is barren, and the very love it expresses, inasmuch as its roots do not strike down into sorrow for sin, dries up at once, never blossoms, and gives out no perfume.

Just as every Christian is a philosopher, so every Christian is a poet. It is a thing that has often even surprised us to see how austere, arid, rigorous minds, yielding to the bold poetry of the Christian faith, become poets in spite of themselves—poets because

they are believers. This poetry only admits simple beauties, but for all that, true and more various beauties than may be supposed. For a rather lengthened period, poetry, almost extinct in Germany, breathed only in pious songs. English *hymns* hold a place in the literature of Great Britain.

Poetry, which is a species of spirituality, would be, for whoever chose to reflect upon it, a valuable indication of our nature and our destination. A religion has been made of it; and poetry itself has made religion; but religion is a virtue, and though poetry have the same date as virtue, it does not proceed from the same principle. Poetry ought simply to have warned us, to have recalled our dignity, to have thrown into the infinite one of the anchors of our vessel. If it has so frequently been a distraction of the soul, is this not rather our fault than that of poetry?

If there be a true religion, to say that poetry cannot apply itself thereto without changing it, and that the mutual contact of religion and of art is fatal to one or the other, is to make poetry an attribute and characteristic not of restored, but of fallen humanity; it is only to concede to it a provisional legitimacy; it is to declare it capable of life in the soul only until conversion; it is to assert that the poet becomes absorbed and annulled in the believer, and poetry in truth.

The pursuit after the ideal, having met with its object in the object of the Christian faith, would, we

might suppose, thenceforth cease. But the restoration effected in us by the Gospel word and the Spirit of God does not take us back to the point from which sin removed us. Our new state may be as good, may be even better than our original one, but it differs from it. Virtue replaces innocence; innocence is not recovered. The memory of the fall remains; the knowledge of good and evil remains; life and the soul are no longer simple.

And, besides, has not religion, positive religion, its own peculiar poetry, a poetry belonging to itself alone? People are ready to discover this in the troubled time of the Church; they admit that poetry is profusely scattered amidst the annals of persecution and martyrdom; but the persecution that the soul endures within, that long, perpetual, and secret martyrdom of fidelity, that burning conflict of prayer, those agonies of love, that zeal which makes each Christian another Moses on another Nebo, sustaining by his tears that army of martyrs that only his aspirations may accompany into another Canaan; the holy terror which seizes the soul and the imagination on the borders of the deep things of God; the new solemnity given to life and death, the touching language of the whole creation, to which faith has found the key that sin had lost—how many elements, how many sources of poetry here! and when could they be exhausted? They renew themselves in every soul; each rehearsing in his own manner the universal drama of faith. Not only has

Christianity its poetry, but every heart-Christian is a poet by the very fact that he is a Christian. Here is a source of poetry as well as truth open to those whose soul but for it would scarcely have risen above prose. Many have indulged in a holy censure of poetry, have repudiated it; and sometimes their very anathemas were poetry!

Never will we accept your beautiful verses in exchange for the truth that you owe us, shall be our language to poets and to Christians. Never will we excuse bad verses or bad rhymes in compliment to your poetry; nothing obliges you to put your Christianity into verse, or even to believe that this form suits it; but, whether Christians or no, verses are verses, and the best sentiments will not make them good if they are in themselves bad. If you do not choose to adorn Truth, leave her unclothed; that suits her beauty well; but do not degrade her by covering her with rags. If you find it too difficult to compose good verses, write good prose, which is not, however, all things considered, infinitely more easy, but which is just as necessary; for whatever one has to say must be well said: to state the truth ill is to act ungently towards her, and to refuse what properly belongs to her.

That in the occurrences of daily life the substance be accepted for love of the form, or that the form pass in virtue of the substance, we readily allow; and hold ourselves fortunate not to find everything bad where everything is not good. But the accident is

not the rule ; the rule decrees that “ the good should always accompany the beautiful.” There is no more half-poetry than half-Christianity ; and it is simpler, and, indeed, more reasonable, to be neither poet nor Christian in any degree whatever than to pretend to be so by halves.

It is because all poetry born in a Christian land is not Christian that Christian poetry has become a style apart ; but it is also because the least pure elements that have made their way into the Christian world have passed into Christianity, that is to say, into the idea of it generally entertained,—it is because there are at the present time many different Christianities, very little familiar and sociable among themselves,—that the title Christian has come to mean pretty nearly anything and everything.

That an expression of profound pity, of ecstasy, or love may give rise to a pious emotion within the soul I noways deny ; and woe, woe to art had it not such power ! but I doubt whether the beauty of forms be able to raise the soul, and to spiritualise it to the point of prayer.

2. *Poetry and Morality.*

Every moral truth is a part of Christianity, which is the whole truth. Christianity adopts, or rather, claims whatsoever is true. It is by this that poets who have in other respects—both in their writings, and worse, in their lives—failed to pay sufficient respect

to the laws of morality, have yet been Christians unknown to themselves in their pictures of humanity.

Remarkable fact! there are often two men in the same poet,—the one who moralises directly, and tends as much as lies in his power to establish a worldly morality; the other, who decries it, and tends towards Christian morality. This latter morality has, then, friends amongst its foes, and it defies them to prove their own doctrine as well as they demonstrate and consolidate hers.

There can be no poetry without internal liberty; and there is no liberty in passion. But there is a moment when passion itself becomes thought; still more, affection, duty, all the moral elements, all the moral acts of human life. All this constitutes not an obstacle, but the treasury, the condition of poetry. All this had, at all events, to be divined before poetry could be written; and are we not more sure to understand it all after having experienced it, to express this life when we ourselves have lived? Can poetical divination go further or know more than personal experience? And although talent, as it appears, has an entrance everywhere, may there not be some sacred retreats into which it can only penetrate under the auspices and treading in the footsteps of memory?

A poet must already be moral up to a certain point if he be true, if passion and human nature show themselves in his works such as they really are;

if he express without disguise the strength and the weakness of everything; if he do not carry the fictitious into poetry; if, in a word, in default of just conclusion, he furnish us with correct premises whereon to base our own conclusions. All great poets have had this gift; and hence their works have become so precious to all ages; talent can insure popularity for a time, truth alone bestows immortality.

I only demand from the poet that he be true, and do not interest himself in vice; this is the whole of his positive morality.

If at the close of some lively moral excitement, some movement of enthusiasm produced by reading, by a composition, by the theatre, or whatever other cause, we do not feel ourselves equally—nay, feel ourselves less disposed to practise some minor virtue, to make some sacrifice without praise or ostentation, let us say to ourselves that we have experienced a poetical emotion and nothing more. A truly moral emotion would have embellished in our eyes every one of our duties; would have added charm and grace to the most repulsive. In this order, poetry is the tributary of life, not life of poetry.

Egotism is absolute solitude. The man who loves neither God nor his neighbour is an exile, a voluntary prisoner, but if he cannot escape from contempt, he escapes from Poetry; she will not go and shut herself up with him in his dungeon for the sake of painting him; she only points her finger at him, and passes on.

It is a great misfortune for a people, and it is one for poetry too, when all natural sentiments find themselves isolated from the religious sentiment. You may do what you will, there is something false and incomplete; weak and violent at once are all affections with which that Divine affection is not blent; without it there is nothing but what sounds hollow, nothing but what in the long run proves vulnerable to fresh influences and convictions. Political poetry less than any other dispenses with this combination, which we may compare to the mingling silver largely with brass, in order to make it more sonorous. Béranger himself appears to have felt this.

3. *Sacred Poetry — Hymn Writing — Its Condition, Individuality.*

Everywhere poetry has formed a part of the "cortège" of religion. Whenever dogma, received into the conscience or sanctioned by the mind, has passed into the heart or taken hold of the imagination, ordinary speech no longer sufficing to the soul's transports, it invokes the aid of that mysterious language which is itself a kind of religion, an aspiration after the invisible and the infinite. Nevertheless, the true religion is the only one which can boast of having, in all the force of the term, a sacred poetry, because the true religion alone stirs the soul in its utmost depths, and makes all its faculties tend at once to one same object.

Popular sacred poetry belongs to the religion of individualism, to Protestant Christianity. Protestantism makes poetry as well as faith the common possession of all.

To be a Christian without any peculiar tinge, a Christian in the simple acceptation of the word, is a primary condition of success in sacred poetry.

A spontaneous strain springs from the superabundance of any sentiment whatever which seeks an egress, which asks itself for an echo.

The logical simplicity of the hymn should be carried to humility. The sublime is permissible to it, but never the ingenious.

There is a deep line of demarcation between the mental state of the natural man and that of one who has been touched by Divine grace. Imagination, that echo from the soul of all in the soul of each, suffices to explain the first of these conditions; it contains within itself all the necessary facts; but the impressions of Gospel doctrines upon a soul are not equally within its reach. Not being able to conceive, it cannot describe them; it cannot paint them, or it paints them without truth or life; for its power does not in any department extend to painting that of which it has no anticipated knowledge, no internal perception. General passions have sometimes been rendered with such startling truth, that it seems as though the poet could not have described them better had he himself experienced them; but I do not think

this can be the case with positively Christian emotions.

The hymn is bound to connect itself with the substance of things. Its beauty lies in idea and cadences, rather than in images. But the very cadence of which it is susceptible is an earnest, grave, continuous one, quite different from the sudden turns of the Pindaric style, and even from the impetuous sallies of eloquence. Christian song pours forth in large transparent waves from a soul touched yet calm. A too ingenious imagery ill befits it; effort is fatal to it; in the matter of ideas it is only the simple and sublime that it dare employ.

Individuality, indeed, is not prohibited, but a too strongly marked individuality produces rather the Christian elegy than the hymn. Grace is permissible to the hymn, but it must be an austere grace; Biblical words must be able to fit into it without discrepancy or discord; and just as the Gospel is the common language of great and small, so the hymn is in poetry the common medium of all intellects; it should therefore be like the Bible—nobly popular.

THIRD SECTION.

ELOQUENCE.



I.—ELOQUENCE IN GENERAL.

1. *Its Definition — Eloquence and Truth — Spoken and Written Eloquence—Eloquence and Individuality.*

ELOQUENCE is a gift, and a gift of the soul. It is the gift of thinking and feeling what others think and feel, and of adopting the words and movements of one's discourse thereto; in short, speaking the thoughts of others. Eloquence rests on sympathy. We are never eloquent except on condition of speaking or writing, as it were, under the dictation of those whom we address. It is our hearers who inspire us, and if this condition be not fulfilled, we may be profound or agreeable, but we shall not be eloquent. In order to be eloquent, we must feel the need of communicating our life to others, and intimately comprehend the chords that must be made to vibrate in them.

Eloquence, in the sense of La Bruyère and Pascal, is an action of real life, an effort put forth against a resistance, a *compulsion*—one might say a drama,

where only one person appears, but where there are two; a drama which has its plot, its reverses, and its *dénouement*. This *dénouement* may, according to the nature of the case, be a determination, a voluntary act of the one we address, or else a sentiment which is also an act, and from the point of view of philosophy and religion *the act par excellence*.

A discourse is eloquent when it establishes between us and its object just and distinct relations; when it places our conviction in harmony with our sentiments, and our sentiments in harmony with our conviction; when it so closely unites our impressions with those of the orator that the two streams have only one course.

At bottom, to be eloquent is to be true; to be eloquent is not to add something to the truth, it is rather to remove one after the other the veils that cover it. And this is no negative function, for facts are truth. In this sense Pascal is pre-eminently an orator, because he is also as severely true as it is possible to be. But truth does not reside merely in facts, it is equally found in the sentiment of truth. To unite ourselves with it, to be pathetic in its cause, is a second way of being true. Is truth spoken with love less truth than before? Surely not; but truth seen, but outside of us, is not truth as yet.

Truth is eloquent in itself: we do not add eloquence to it; we rather elicit it therefrom; truth, in whatever sense the word be taken, is the condition and

material of eloquence. Rhetoric is only the art of extracting and afterwards purifying this precious mineral. One expression is more beautiful than another only because it is more true, more adequate to the idea. Cicero defined eloquence as *aptè dicere*. Eloquence may strive in vain, it can never be more eloquent than truth; eloquence is at bottom nothing but truth, and the most accomplished orator is the one who places truth in its fullest light; and often nothing more is required for this than to cite facts, to name things.

Eloquence being nothing more than truth placed in fullest light, truth is at bottom the very groundwork and soul of eloquence.

An oratorical discourse is an action before it is a discourse. *Eloquence is a virtue*. Woe to him who, erecting the means into an end, sees only in rhetoric the art of making a discourse, and not the art of proportioning language to truth and truth to man! He for whom a speech is only a speech will never be eloquent; my speech, to be eloquent, must be a business (*negotium*) in the most real sense of the word, a substantial and veritable action, an event in my moral and civil life; my speech must be myself, and not—whether good or bad deformed or beautiful—a something external to myself.

Eloquence is the concurrence and concentration of all the internal energies of a man in the exposition, or, if I may so express myself, in the *vindication* of truth. Eloquence is the whole man, mind, imagina-

tion, will, and all these reduced to an indivisible unity. There can be no eloquence without poetry, none without philosophy, none without passion. Born from the true influence of these sources, the stream of eloquence does not always hollow out abysses, nor always form cataracts ; but it is always a stream and never a lake : continuity of movement is the most essential condition of eloquence, and in this general movement there are also special movements, unforeseen and sudden inflections, not less characteristic signs, or less essential forms, of a truly eloquent discourse. These accidents, arising from the lively intuition of certain relations that only the soul takes cognisance of, are true eloquence, and some of the finest oratorical passages that are quoted with delight are neither more nor less than such transitions as these.

That which is eloquent in eloquent productions is truth ; eloquence is nothing but impassioned truth ; that is to say, truth in its plenitude, for passion completes truth. I am speaking, be it observed, of truths of the moral order.

That which is sensibly and effectively eloquent is not truth external to us, but truth within us ; consequently, as I expressed myself just now, impassioned truth.

Our written eloquence is not more lively nor more oratorical than our spoken eloquence, but I believe it to be more perfect.

A German or an English book, as a book, is a

monologue, a long *aside*; with certain nations an harangue even is a book; with us a book is an harangue, and every writer a species of orator; to which we may add that in that tribune entitled a book, we generally find ourselves more at ease than in any other.

Neither preaching nor pleading, nor any other public and solemn exercise of language, has anything in common with eloquence, if it set eloquence itself before it as an object; it is with true eloquence as with true probity, which is "careful for nothing;" the orator is a man of action, in whom thought does nothing but continue or precede action; a speech is a very real scene between two very animated interlocutors, only one of whom allows himself to be heard; in short, truth, movement, grandeur, all this and nothing else, is the whole of eloquence.

There is but one eloquence, and nevertheless every one has his own. He who has not his own has none; the art which remains impersonal has no range and does not hit home; for the idea is only somewhat for the multitude on condition of making itself flesh, of becoming man, and the abstract man is not a living man.

However much the word individuality be abused, I feel myself obliged to recommend the orator to be individual;—which does not mean to withdraw himself from the general laws, the oblivion of which places us out of the conditions of human communion, but acquitting himself of his mission as an

intelligent and responsible being, and taking count of the particular manner in which he is affected by the truth. Must not the liquid assume the form of the vase into which it is poured, and yet does this form in any way change the liquid itself? Without individuality, no truth. In art as in religion, objectivity, objective truth, has ingenuousness for its condition, and there can be no ingenuousness without individuality. When we renounce our own selves in favour of a third—that is to say, of a model or conventional life, what does truth gain thereby? It is essential, then, that we place ourselves in presence of our subject, that we submit to its influence, receive its law, owe to it our form, and, while profiting by models, accept no other form than that which the law of good sense and the knowledge of human nature imprint on our works. It is clear, in fact, that individuality equally finds its scope in the structure of a discourse as everywhere else.

Eloquence is made up at once of individuality and of sympathy; to live much in ourselves, to live much in others,—such is the double condition of powerful speaking.

We are well pleased that rank should, up to a certain point, feel intimidated by intellect; but intellect too has its tyranny, and we feel that it is as just to protest and to forearm ourselves against the despotism of talent as against any other. Man is not as yet free, so long as capable, indeed, of resisting material

power, he is not capable of defending his conscience against the attacks of eloquence.

2. *Its Method, Rules, Medium, and Means.*

The method of the orator cannot without inconvenience or injury be confounded with that of the naturalist; now we are involuntarily and through force of habit reducing the former to the latter, transplanting the processes of science into art, which is a mistake. I do not know whether Aristotle would be contented with this, but certainly Plato would not.

The *nosce teipsum* is the motto of the orator as well as the rule of the man.

The sight of a man that nothing distracts or diverts even for a moment from the path that he has marked out for himself is one of the things that most powerfully acts upon the imagination. A mind so completely subjugated by its thought is very likely to subjugate us to it as well. If such a one take one step out of his course, he may depend upon our taking ten. If certain digressions please the genius of eloquence, this is as an exception, and the case is rare; a severe continuity is essential to the perfection of every oratorical achievement.

We must by preference deduce emotion from the loftiest affections. A blow with a clenched fist may bring about weeping. There are generous tears, and there are others that are only too easily made to flow.

Respect for liberty is essential to eloquence, as it is

to Divine grace, that other and sovereign eloquence. One may be convincing without being eloquent.

There is an oratorical order as there is a lyrical order; and I have some spite against Quintilian, and even against Cicero himself, for having, by an abuse of etymology, placed all the force and the very essence of eloquence in elocution. Altering, or perhaps without altering, the application of an expression of Buffon, I would say, eloquence is the order and the movement that we put into our thoughts; or at least it results, before all, from that order and that movement.

When we invite the orator to explore the idea, to seek facts in the idea, we are not proposing to him a barren logical dissection, which could only give superficial results without body or life; we must be careful to remember that the idea itself is a fact, a vast but living fact, taken in its very *substance*, and not in its *formula*; which, like all facts of the moral order, is seen with the soul, and must be felt in order to be known. But this condition once laid down, let us acknowledge that an idea, true at its starting-point, if followed in its course with perseverance and inflexible rigour, would necessarily lead to all the details furnished by immediate observation, and with the additional advantage of co-ordinating these details one with the other, and all of them together, with one primary fact, acquaintance with which gives them a kind of rational life, that the most fortunate empiricism cannot communicate.

This method is not merely legitimate; it is the only one in many cases. Thus every new enterprise, not being able to walk in footsteps already marked out, draws all its information, and, if I may so say, all its itinerary, from some general idea, on the necessary deductions from which it presses hard yet cautiously. How many times has an idea pointed out the way to observation! How often has the astronomer marked out in the vague immensity of the sky the very spot where some star ought to be found, that a little later the telescope showed shining there, having the very size and gravity assigned to it by scientific calculation! How slow would be the progress of science if it contented itself with waiting for facts to come to it, instead of evoking them by the powerful aid of hypothesis! It was an idea that discovered the New World before the ships of Columbus reached its shores; and if the human mind had not its limits (limits that we cannot determine, but must needs allow), it would not merely have been the existence of America, but its configuration, soil, climate, and vegetation, that the *idea*, grown prophetic, would have accurately described.

The true region, the natural medium of eloquence, is the thought of all, and consequently as much as possible the language of all. Eloquence is the contact of man with man, not on his accidental or individual, but his human side. The language, therefore, that befits eloquence is a general, common, usual one. Here nothing rare or exceptional would be

appropriate. I do not say that one may not be eloquent upon or about very special subjects; but one could not be *oratorical* upon such subjects except before a very select audience, to whom they offer no difficulty, and who can rapidly refer special to general ideas, the only ones that are oratorical.

Everything else being equal, the subject of politics is usually more favourable than any other to eloquence.

Effusion is only one of the forms of eloquence; we must neither interdict nor prescribe it to ourselves; we are always sufficiently eloquent when we are entirely true to ourselves, and it would not be just to confound self-possession with coldness. I cannot, however, deny that a certain degree of reserve in expression is but little adapted faithfully to represent the true position of the moral being with regard to the moral law and its Divine Author. However abused a particular language may have been, that which an inevitable reaction has brought into vogue is rather too prominently philosophical and intellectual in tone; but it is too true that mere declamation has forced us to it.

Many an author, whose personal eloquence lacks nature and simplicity, sometimes recovers these precious qualities when he makes others speak. We might say that it is easier to speak well in the name of some third person than our own, and perfectly to imitate eloquence than to be simply eloquent on our own account.

Do not confine yourself to authors of your own class or your own species. Let the orator study his art among historians, the preacher among lawyers; all among those who are neither orators nor writers. This is a principle of rhetoric to be found in no rhetoric, and yet it is the most important of all. Whether we want to be preacher or advocate, it is in common life that we must study language.

It is in expatriating ourselves, as it were, in getting out of our own special class, that we rise to general ideas on the nature of eloquence.

It would be an error to suppose that the only models are great preachers for the preacher, great advocates for the advocate, the masters of the tribune for the aspirant to the post of deputy, or even, in a general way, orators for the orator. This is a dangerous view, for the idea of eloquence ought to remain free and unlimited in our mind. To substitute a type, even the most perfect, is to limit it; nay, more, it is to disguise. If such were to be the result of reading special models, it would be better to leave them unread. Almost all of them, I allow, rise beyond our conceptions, and raise us with them; let us therefore read them, we shall do well; but let us beware of only seeking eloquence where we find it *ready made*; let us seek it where it is still in an elementary, virtual condition, where the substance is found without the form. Otherwise we shall run great danger of being for ever in captivity to the form, and of seeing the idea escape us by incorpo-

rating itself in the phenomenon or the accident. . . . There is no fruitful and living imitation save that of the internal model.

Clearness in eloquence is often in itself alone a great means of persuasion, but may we not add that it is at the same time often a snare? It is not always a proof of correct reasoning, still less correct views; it may equally with elegance accompany and decorate error. One may no doubt be both superficial and obscure, but superficiality sometimes gives clearness to those whom a higher flight would have lost and left in the clouds. We must always distrust obscurity, but we must not place absolute confidence in clearness. Self-love and indolence conspire to prepossess us in favour of what is clear; but to judge of an author, it is not enough to understand him easily from the point of view he has taken up; we must, above all, examine that point of view itself. From the top of a hill the horizon is distinct because it is limited; from the summit of a mountain the view we embrace may be somewhat confused at its furthest limits, but then it is immense.

Eloquence, like all other acts, is a product, a development of nature. It should present the same phenomena as nature. If it be cultivated in a natural order, it is impossible but that it should produce the beautiful in producing the useful; but just as in morals the useful is produced by the good, so in art the truly beautiful can only spring from the useful. Here, then, the useful takes the first place; but the

useful in this domain is the conviction, is the precise determination of the will ; and the useful, according to moral laws, is one with the true, the just, and the good. It is, then, from the very substance of the subject that our ornamentation should be evolved ; the only true, and therefore the only beautiful, is to be found there : nothing is absolutely beautiful in itself but by the place that it occupies ; it would therefore be a great miscalculation to seek for ornaments outside of our subject, in other words, outside of our aim. Our subject places these ornaments within our grasp ; there is no need to wander from it.

Eloquence, being not a species of composition, but an energy of the soul, permeates and animates on occasion the most widely different matters. The oratorical style in public speaking is only its most immediate occasion and most complete form. But eloquence in the art of writing is none the less a special virtue — a beauty distinguishable from all others.

It associates itself, if need be, with philosophy, with poetry ; it rests on the one, it decks itself with the other, but it is neither the one nor the other. Poetry and philosophy, taken in their purity, disengage themselves from reality to rise to the ideal ; eloquence has reality for its object, and pursues a practical aim ; the first two are disinterested, eloquence cannot be so ; they contemplate, eloquence is action. The philosopher and the poet address themselves to what there is of speculation in our nature ;

the orator seeks to take possession of our will. His function is to be obstinately aggressive; our soul is a fortress to which he lays siege, but could never take if he had not those within on his side. Eloquence is only an appeal to sympathy; its secret consists in discerning and seizing, in the soul of others whatever corresponds with the soul of the orator and with all souls; its aim is to lay hold of the hand that unwittingly we are ever stretching out towards it. It is from us that eloquence obtains the weapons it uses against us; with our concessions it fortifies itself; with our gifts it recommends itself; with our admission it overwhelms us; in other words, the orator invokes intellectual and moral principles that we hold in common with him, and only pressingly demands and insists upon conclusions from those premises. He proves to us that we are in harmony with him, makes us love and feel that harmony; in a word, as it has been energetically said, one can only demonstrate to people what they already believe.

This talent of the mind, or rather of the soul, is a talent apart and distinct from all others. It depends upon a sensibility, a gift of living in our fellow-creatures, that no one can either imitate or teach. Nothing can supply its place, and yet what more simple? But just because it is so simple it is very rare. What are the most famous passages of a Demosthenes, a Bossuet, or a Fox, if not appeals to the good sense of the mind, or to the conscience, which is the good sense of the soul? What is the

true sphere of eloquence, if it be not the *common-place*? This eloquence combines with lofty philosophical considerations, of which modern times furnish instances. We are at first tempted to attribute the impression we receive to philosophy, but eloquence is something more popular; it is the power of making vibrate within us the soul's primitive chords, what it possesses of most simply human; it is this, and nothing else, by which we recognise the orator.

3. *Eloquence—Poetry—Philosophy—Rhetoric.*

We are not orators by the same title that we are poets. A man becomes a poet at the command of his genius, and to sing was never a business; now to speak is one; oral and public eloquence is only one of the dependencies, and one of the instruments of some political design, religious or social. The orator is not first of all an orator. Indeed, he only is one on condition of being something more; this something wanting, we have no longer an orator, but only a rhetorician.

“True eloquence,” said Pascal, “despises eloquence.” If it be supposed that he meant to say that nature despises art, I think this is a mistake; the eloquence at which true eloquence, and Pascal with it, scoffs, is the eloquence of the schools,—formal eloquence, which reduces everything to conventions and receipts,—is pompous would-be eloquence, which thinks to raise itself by avoiding simplicity; or, in a word, a phantom,

a *simulacrum* of eloquence, form without substance, organism without life.

No one can set his conscience at rest and his life at liberty without the aid of sophistry, and sophistry will not go far unsupported by rhetoric.

Rhetoric, that treasury of forms, has itself more than one form, and every man is rhetorical because every man is false.

Rhetoric is not always where we look for it, it is more often still where we did not expect it to be.

II.—PULPIT ELOQUENCE.

1. *Necessity of Art and of Study—Authority.*

Study has very immediate practical applications. There is no development of the human mind which is not either an aid or an obstacle to religion. Nothing is indifferent, everything serves or injures. Even the most scientific doctrines, the most abstract systems, at the end of a given time, descend among the people.

We must study to excite and enrich our own thought by means of the thought of others. Those who do not study will find their talent wither, will be old in mind before their time. Experience abundantly exemplifies this in the matter of preaching. Whence comes it that preachers exceedingly admired at their outset so rapidly decline, or remain so far below the hopes to which they gave rise? Generally this comes of their having left off study.

Doubtless it is God who converts—there is the principle ; but He converts man by man—here is the fact ; I mean by the personal, living, moral man. As soon as you admit this fact you admit art in preaching ; for what would man be *minus* thought ? and how can you leave him thought, and prevent him from reasoning out what he does ? And if he reasons will he reason by halves ? If the Holy Spirit does not hold the pen, it must needs be man himself that holds it ; if he be not inspired, he must needs reflect. Inspiration being laid aside, I cannot see why he should prefer trusting to his first impulse rather than to reflection, to chance rather than to art. To take for our starting-point that human wisdom for which the cross is foolishness, is to repudiate that foolishness which is the very doctrine of salvation. But reflection, method, in a word, art, has nothing in common with the human wisdom alluded to. The most skilful preacher, the *wisest*, as far as art goes, may abound in the “foolishness of God,” just as the most utter stranger to this Divine foolishness may be absolutely deficient in art.

The art of abstracting, generalising, harmonising principles will never be disdained by enlightened preachers ; and there is also a Christian philosophy, which, confined within precise limit, has its use in preaching, and even in life. And in our days we have already seen it applied to Christianity with equal propriety and success.

If God makes use of means, we may well make

use of them ; our faculties are not more unworthy of us than we are of God ; and if it is indubitable that God consents to make man His means, let us place all these means, that is, the whole man, at God's disposal. Now man comprehends art, man is essentially an artist ; take away art, man is man no longer.

A literary invalid, to whom a friend was endeavouring to represent the joys of paradise, interrupted him thus :—“Do not speak of them, father ; your bad style would disgust me with them.” This profane witticism is the last word of intellectual Epicureanism. But, frankly, it is not permissible to speak of Divine things in bad style. In vain may it be said that the things themselves should speak ; but what is a vicious style but something that hinders them from speaking, an unfaithful style, a style that is not true (and in this respect it may be at once elegant and bad) ; and what, on the other hand, is a good style, but one that is true in every respect ?

If there be so many ministers that one cannot endure to hear ; if vapid discourses be so frequent in the pulpit ; if the feeblest advocates can scarcely sink so low as do the feeblest preachers, it is because art, still more necessary in the pulpit than at the bar, is denied by indolence or repulsed by prejudice. An opposite doctrine would infallibly raise the level of ecclesiastical eloquence. Let the youngest amongst the most zealous make the attempt ; they will soon get rid of the mistaken idea that art is something essentially voluminous, which requires, in order to its

development, a great space,—that is to say, a great time; they will soon comprehend, and later will know experimentally, that a great deal of art can be comprised within the limits of a single hour; intensity of labour is equivalent to long duration; when this discovery has been made, a great step in advance has been taken. What in many minds has tended to discredit art is not art itself, is not even the abuse of it; is far rather its absence. A discourse whose progress is stilted, whose plan is painfully symmetrical, whose style is pompous or over-ornate, whose periods are uniformly rounded and sonorous, depresses or provokes us by its icy elegance. Let us emphatically condemn so false a style as this. Let us even venture to blame, in works of far greater earnestness and simplicity, a certain stiffness of form and elaboration of language, latest and too enduring vestiges of a time when eloquence was theatrical. Let us banish, if you will, the rhetoric of rhetoricians to make way for that of philosophy. Let us redemand the rights of individuality, which is to art what liberty is to faith. But do not let us accuse or banish art, which has nothing to do with the peculiarities that have shocked us. Art is necessary, art is immortal; the very reforms that we recommend lie under its jurisdiction, and will be its work; and when we have obtained them we shall say, with equal right and truth, At last nature has recovered its rights; at last art has triumphed! Art, in fact, consists essentially in observing and perhaps in rediscovering nature.

There is only one real opposition ; it is not that between nature and art, but that between true and false art. If we hold to this formula, it is because this formula is a principle.

The spirit of analysis of our age has pulverised so many opinions, has left so few beliefs erect ! Pure reasoning is so powerless an agent in reinstating the moral world and natural religion ! Happy then he who has received from God the solution that earth is unable to bestow ! An arbitrary solution this, but one which ought to be arbitrary, since it is proved by the fact that reason cannot discover a natural one. Happy then the man who has found it ! he has something to impart to souls, and in his humble dependence on revealed truth he is in reality far more independent, he has much more influence, than the preacher who will only believe in himself, and who is constantly surprised at not believing in himself.

What subjugates men is authority, and there is little authority in passion.

The man who is easily impressed by others is not calculated to make an impression upon them ; he who trembles before them will never cause them to tremble ; and if Peter, in preaching his first sermon, his probationary sermon if you will, had been pre-occupied with his own position, and the opinions of his audience, he would never have heard the multitude, moved and repentant, asking, at the close of his discourse, " Men and brethren, what shall we do ?" (Acts ii. 37).

I think that we in general are contented in this

matter of authority to keep below what is legitimate, possible, and even necessary. The boldness and freedom that should belong to prophets do not make themselves sufficiently felt in our discourses. In a word, we do not enough reprove. We fight with foils as at a fencing match; we forget that a serious conflict requires the naked blade, and that a mere semblance of combat leads only to a semblance of victory. A more kindly compassion for our flocks, a deeper sense of our responsibilities, in short, a higher and more solemn ideal of our state, ought to place us above vain considerations and conventionalities, with which in truth we have nothing to do. This may not, I admit, be the idea entertained of the ministry now-a-days, but does it behove us to conform to that ideal, or to reform it? If the world's maxims on this head are to fix the measure of our liberty, there is no reason why we should not sink lower and lower in complaisance; if, on the contrary, we adjudge to ourselves all the liberty that Christianly we may,—if, far from allowing our ministry to be infringed upon, we claim for it all the authority that rightly belongs to it,—there is every reason to believe that the world, with some surprise at first, will consent and grow accustomed to our fidelity. After all, it loves courage and independence; it is only strong against the weak; and it is our timidity which makes its boldness. Everywhere and in all times, provided that we follow truth with charity, our ministry will be what we choose that it should be; and besides,

whether accepted or not accepted, the essential is that it be what it ought to be.

If we ask what the difference is in the matter of authority between our times and those of old, we shall not find the explanation to be any weakening of conviction on the part of ministers, but a circumstance of another kind ; and perhaps, looking closely, we shall discover that authority only appears to have decreased because it had once been exaggerated, or that the cords, so to speak, only appear loose at the present time because they had been too tightly drawn of yore. With the authority of conviction and internal vocation, which is all in all, there had mingled imperceptibly the authority of position or external vocation ; and perhaps the latter had but too large a share in the confident and lofty tone of preaching that prevailed. There was not more true faith or less real incredulity then than now, but this incredulity was less given to pronounce itself, and even knew itself less ; it had not yet been driven by circumstances to proclaim or investigate itself ; even amongst those who on this point perfectly understood themselves, and had no remaining delusion, the majority, whether through prudence or deference, kept silence, and the small number who gave themselves out as what they really were, were blamed even by such as shared their opinions. The legal fiction, or rather the common prejudice, was that all the world believed. The flocks still appeared entire and compact ; the Church thoroughly incorporated

with political institutions ; faith was invariably, and with good right, taken for granted ; the clergy seemed tranquil occupants of a strong position, and of privileges, for the defence of which they would, I imagine, have made few sacrifices, but against which their opponents made but feeble efforts. I do earnestly believe that the change that has supervened, and that many deplore, is a Divine benediction ; and that if the unbelief that formerly ignored itself is self-conscious now, if the opposition that kept its own secret now discovers and declares itself, there is in this nothing but progress.

It is the duty of some to examine before believing ; it is the duty of others energetically to affirm the object of their faith. This energy, persistency, earnestness, in a word, this authority, do not in the slightest degree attack liberty ; they do but warn and rouse the conscience ; and preaching only infringes upon liberty when it troubles the soul and convulses it by its assumptions, and, under cover of the noise and tumult it has excited, snatches from us an assent that our soul, touched and attentive but calm and self-collected, would never have granted.

The most modest of men must know how to sacrifice his modesty to the dignity of Truth, and a lofty tone becomes him when it is for her he is speaking. But authority is still more essential to Christian preaching, which speaks on the part of God himself, and announces the oracles of God. Were we not to set this seal on our discourses we should wound

simple souls ; nay, we should even astonish those who do not believe our Gospel. They do not share our point of view, but they perfectly know what it ought to be ; if they permit us to be convinced, they equally permit us to speak with authority ; and by taking any other tone in their presence we shall only succeed in scandalising and estranging them still further.

Those who, in this world of inconstancy and perplexity, express themselves upon a serious subject with conviction and authority, secure to themselves beforehand a favourable hearing. The first thing that strikes us in an orator, and wins for him our attention, is that he draws all his authority from his message, and not from himself, and that he is as modest as he is thoroughly convinced.

If authority were all or nearly all in preaching, preaching would soon reduce itself to nothing.

Experience and argument blend in the pulpit with authority, not in order to prove the authenticity of the documents, which is out of the question, nor to act as an ally to evidence, since the certainty that springs from this testimony is not a semi-certainty ; but because subjectively, and with regard to the final end kept in view, no proof suffices in this sphere unless the testimony of the heart combines with it, and because the declarations of the Bible are often only starting-points for the reason.

2. General Precepts—Familiarity and Prattle.

We fancy that there is no mystery in the action of soul upon soul by means of speech, because it is a very ordinary thing; as if what was ordinary were not often exceedingly mysterious and inscrutable. The same words act in one way upon this man, in another way upon that. No doubt the character of the individual has a great deal to do with it, but whence comes it that a vehement preacher often fails to produce any effect, and a feeble one to leave deep furrows in the souls of those who hear him? How many who have not been touched by one man's sermon are so by another's! How often it only depends upon a word whether the listening soul be converted or not! Is not the dispensation, in virtue of which one soul, one single soul, may be touched, while a whole crowd around it remains cold,—is not this the greatest of mysteries? Yes, preaching is a mystery, the most profound of all, the one that includes a multitude of other mysteries. In point of fact, it is God who preaches, and man is but His instrument.

Conflict is always found at the bottom of a pastor's work. The high priest is himself the victim, and it is his own blood that flows on the altar.

It is written in facts as well as in the nature of things, that the preaching which is not Christian

cannot be eloquent, and that positive faith is alone competent to give masterpieces to the pulpit.

One would always, if one could, be very eloquent; but we must sometimes resign ourselves to the sedate, humble, and weak. A cold and feeble but sincere discourse will be more blessed than an eloquent one which transcends the condition of the hearer.

The Christian idea is beautiful, especially from its purity: it only tolerates pure ornaments; the style, which is the man, ought to be converted with the man, or at all events shortly afterwards.

I am not much more partial to the lustre of imagery in pulpit discourses than to gold in the priestly vestments, or luxury in the sanctuary.

Why is it that the *plots* of modern writers excel those of the ancients? Because Christianity has changed our moral point of view, and inspired us with respect for individuality in ourselves and others. But could the *literary* beauty resulting hence be appreciated or felt by those who had not experienced the same influence? Would a Greek of the time of Euripides be aware of it? The *beautiful*, therefore, is here only the highest power of the good, and this superior good is of Christian invention.

One thing has greatly misled pulpit orators,—the desire, at all risks and in all cases, and continually, to be orators. In this respect great models have done them harm. They have not perceived that these models themselves were only orators on occasion, and sometimes in their own despite. The

preacher in his own parish is first of all the catechist or teacher.

Indignation, that anger of the conscience, is as worthy of the Christian as any other anger is unworthy. The love of good, as we have said, implies the hatred of evil; and if love has its effusions and transports, why should not hatred as well? How, indeed, could we excite it if we dared not express it? Did not the prophets and apostles, did not Jesus Christ himself, give free scope to the sorrow and pious wrath with which their soul was filled? It is with holy anger as with a thunder-clap in a clear sky, it neither interrupts nor troubles the soul's serenity; it is not opposed to love; on the contrary, it would be a want of love not to feel and not to show it.

The church is a heaven; we enter for a moment into eternity, to return into time; and of all the events that go on outside nothing should penetrate there but one single thing, the truths these events bring with them.

Grace has not depreciated nature; and because the heavens do not tell all the glory of God, it does not follow that they have become dumb on that great subject.

Nature is an immense parable.

One is no Christian if one does not think one's religion, if one is not persuaded of it; now both these conditions are incompatible with a violent and perturbing eloquence.

The political eloquence of the ancients sought to disturb, and avowed its aim ; preaching, whenever it curtails our internal liberty, tears its credentials.*

It seems to me that religion would appear a far more real, proximate, and necessary thing if we saw it, like a pure and Divine blood, throbbing and pulsing throughout life ; and if preaching, after having proved it to us as rational, made us feel it as living, that is to say, human.

The traditional form of pulpit discourses, a form that their aim has never entirely justified, is a complete anachronism now-a-days ; and in the midst of a movement tending to transform the ideal into an action, there is great impropriety in giving to an action, the most positive as well as the highest of all, the false appearance of an idea.

Prattle in the pulpit is always unbecoming, for there can be no religious prattle ; these are terms that exclude each other.

But the preacher who is not familiar, and who takes into the pulpit all the proprieties and periphrases of worldly civility, who maintains his reserve, who never surrenders himself, is a friend who stretches out his hand indeed, but it is a gloved hand, in which we feel no warmth and no life. How then if care be taken to cover up this hand before stretching it out to a friend—that is, if the preacher permit himself less freedom, less spontaneity in the pulpit than in ordinary meetings even, and in the superficial intercourse of social life ? If we correctly under-

stand the position of the preacher, invested as he is, for a short space of time at least, with the freedom of a father and a brother, his language will be familiar inasmuch as it will be full, and indeed, made up of turns, movements, and forms of speech borrowed from family and friendly relations. This language will indicate the relation that he feels to exist between his audience and himself; it will give the feeling that it is not a new idea, but a common, actual, and dominant interest that he is discussing with his hearers; it will draw them nearer to him. There is no need to distinguish the familiarity we have in view from an indecent and profane familiarity of another kind; the essential, in and above all things, is to be animated with Christian feeling; this feeling at once creates and limits familiarity, which, if it be truly Christian, will ever be accompanied by that holy reserve which is never absent from the freest outpourings of two Christians to one another.

3. *Facts and Ideas; two Opposite Excesses—Sermons, Conferences—Homilies—Eloquence of the Reformation—The Bible and Pulpit Eloquence.*

Preaching has always tended to two opposite extremes,—to transform itself into the image of the preacher, or into that of a certain conventional idea. Both extremes are dangerous, but the second is more common than the first. The preacher who yields himself without any counterpoise to his individual

impressions, the lyrical or contemplative preacher, if one may venture to call him so, deceives himself woefully as to his mission. No doubt a man should be individual; and it is remarkable that he must be so in order to be universal, that is to say, to speak a language which reaches the heart of all: but this rule has its limitations; and he may perhaps be a poet, but no orator, who knows not how, by coming out of himself, to place himself in that standpoint where all human souls re-unite, and form, so to speak, only one single soul.

The objective element, moreover, has its place, and a very large place too, in Christian preaching: the minister of the Gospel announces the Gospel; he has to relate not his own private history, but the wonders of God; only he relates these with his own soul; it is on that soul, as on a living focus, that the rays of truth fall, to strike thence on other souls; and these truths, which ought to have become a part of himself, reach his hearers as an emanation of his being, real and personal at the same time, objective and subjective, Divine and human.

This is sufficiently to assert that preaching may subject itself to no other form than that of the truth itself, whether external or internal; that it rejects every other type, that it is bound to nothing conventional or traditional. Preaching does not, like the preacher, wear a gown and bands; its language is that of the subjects it treats, and no other. Earnestness, unction, simplicity, are its forms; it has none more

special, it has no *rites*, and nothing obliges the preacher to make it an additional *chant*, almost as invariably noted as the musical one.

Grave subjects, and still more, holy subjects, equally reject what is too subtle, too pungent, too varied, too brilliant, and do not permit worldliness to penetrate by a thousand allusions (what, in fact, are those charms of the style in vogue except such allusions?) into an eloquence devoted to the triumph of the invisible over the visible, of eternity over time. It is from want of study, and perhaps want of imagination, that an orator goes seeking for beauties outside of his subject; if this be not the orator's fault, we must then admit that a subject that reduces him to seek his resources thus promiscuously was not worthy to be treated; and one of the most indisputable stigmas of a degenerate literature is this drawing ornamentation not from the substance of the subjects themselves, but from without, instead of seeking in one and the same place, and educing in one gush, both the force of a discourse and its beauty.

The preacher—or let us say in general the moralist—may revert directly to things, to facts; may show them as immediately as he himself has seen them; may let them, as it were, speak: but he may also address himself to the idea that includes or sums them up; and, by exploring that idea, cause by the method of deduction all the facts therein contained to come forth one after the other with their own form and colour. If it be so that he has not himself

seen them, he trusts to the analysis of the idea giving him the mental vision of details with which he has not come into contact or known by experience. Now is this method legitimate? is it safe? may we recommend it to the preacher? Yes, but not exclusively; nothing may compensate for experimentation; nothing can absolutely supply the place of sight and life; no speculation can teach by itself the secret of those true and lively tones, those cries of the soul, that poignant reality, which strictly belong to ocular testimony and personal recollections.

I should like to say to the youthful preacher, Above all, observe, feel, live; seek facts in facts themselves; be in no hurry to abstract; abstraction itself can only take a living character, and prove fruitful, where there are memories, where life has given rise to thought. But I should, at the same time, be careful not to exclude the other method, which is powerful, fertile, and distinguishes all the great works of moral eloquence. If we must in general have lived with facts in order to reproduce them with a vivacity which shall render them present, we must have meditated upon their idea in order to give them all their meaning and importance. The philosophy of morality and of religion is only discoverable in this way; and this philosophy, be it known, ought to be offered and taught to all.

I am thoroughly convinced that a great number of the most energetic passages, the truest, most intimate, and most highly coloured details that we meet

with in the works of the greatest preachers, and of which at first sight we give the credit to immediate and assiduous observation of real facts, are essentially the deductions from an idea, vividly seized and energetically examined ; I am convinced that without the aid of this method, those great men would have seen far fewer things, and that every mind needs the guidance of a general idea to find its way among facts, to appreciate, and often even to perceive them.

Our pious writings are truer in form, and even in inspiration, than the majority of our sermons. The time is come for *speaking* ; we must not obstinately persist in *preaching*.

Let Christianity lose nothing of its majesty ; in an age when reverence is dying out, let it remain the object of the latest reverence, and bring back all the rest,—reverence for conscience, law, age, weakness, and misfortune ; but in a positive age let it show itself more positive still, and more real than all besides ; let its incomparable dignity be relied on to counterbalance familiarity of expression ; and, very far from fearing that any ridicule will attach to the ingenuous language of nature and the lively colours of reality, let it be understood that it is permitted to the pulpit alone to be familiar with impunity, and that it will never incur ridicule more certainly than by a ceremonious politeness so unlike the frankness of the prophets, and an apparatus of forms so different to the pathetic spontaneity and impetuous logic of the apostles. Precautions intended to disguise the

true nature of things may suit other eloquences, which have to conceal I know not what intimate nothingness in their object ; but Christianity, all life and all substance as it is,—only object absolutely solid and serious of all those that occupy our minds,—Christianity gains everything by coming forward unveiled.

The infinite prolongs, as it were, each of the thoughts and affections of the religious man ; for him everything is stamped with the seal of infinity, and the sentiment of adoration, awakened within him by a worthy object, pervades all his life and all his eloquence by that mysterious savour—for which it would seem as though religion alone could find a name, since it is only that of *unction* that men have ventured to bestow on it.

A good sermon is easier to write than a good homily.

The sermon is motionless, stationary ; it speaks to men of all times. The lecture is progressive ; it follows the course of ideas, of events, and of centuries.

The lecture is a mode of preaching which extends to all that stands in any relation whatever to Christian truth, to all those considerations which may tend to the establishment or the glory of that truth. It embraces the whole of apologetics, embraces all the ideas and all the facts that recommend the Gospel to humanity. It takes note of different ages ; if it reply to the difficulties that suggest themselves to every human soul, it has also respect to those difficulties which are peculiar to certain minds, to those

that result from the actual state of science, or from political anxieties, or from the general condition of society.

The lecture is other than the sermon; it differs from it in that its special aim is instruction, and that it prescribes to this no other limits than those of its object, which is, generally speaking, the demonstration or the development of the truths of Christianity.

We must not forget that the Reformation, which restored and consecrated the principle of religious individuality, addressed itself nevertheless to the masses; it aspired from the first to constitute a people, to organise a State; evangelical in its doctrines, it was Jewish or Catholic in its method; and such as was its method, so too was its preaching. The Reformer of the sixteenth century did not decompose his audience, did not take each individual apart; he embraced the entire mass, and sought to push it on all at once towards one same end

It seems to me that the Bible is the true diapason of the preacher, to whom it gives out with certainty the general tone of his discourse; it is in the Bible that his imagination must steep itself; it is from this medium that he must issue forth, in order to be strong with moderation, simple with grandeur, familiar with nobleness and solemnity. I may remark, in particular, that it is the Bible which impresses on and preserves to pulpit discourses that just measure of popularity which we are constantly exposed, in the present

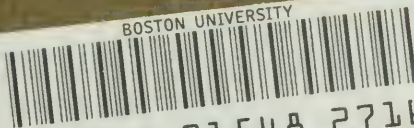
state of our civilisation, either to fall short of or exceed.

Nothing is so human as Christianity; no one is so thoroughly man as the Christian. By inspiring itself with the Scripture the eloquence of the pulpit will attain without difficulty to that grandeur blent with familiarity, that familiarity replete with grandeur, which ought to be, but has not always been, the inimitable seal of preaching.

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